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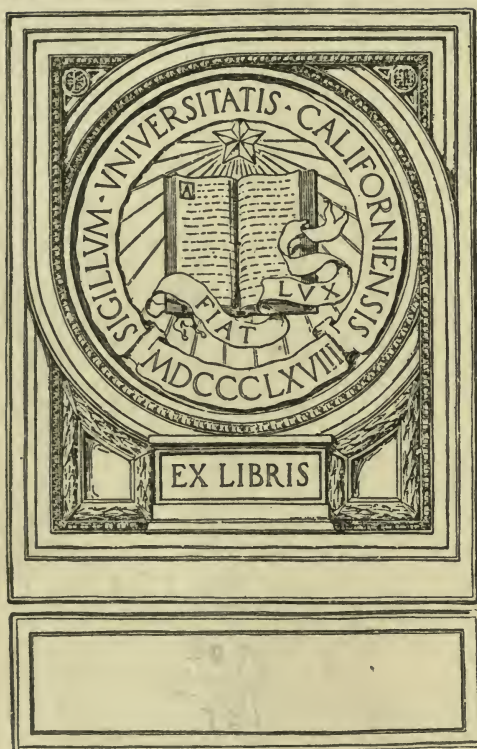
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By HUGH DE SELINCOURT

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LONDON : CHATTO & WINDUS

CAMBRIDGE FROM WITHIN

Univ. of
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THE
GATE
TO
ST. JOHN'S



ST. JOHN'S GREAT GATE.

CAMBRIDGE FROM WITHIN

BY CHARLES TENNYSON

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY MORLEY



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS
MDCCCCXIII 1913

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TO THE
ALABAMA

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TO THE FRIENDS
WHO MAY RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER
BUT I HOPE NOT THEMSELVES
IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES
THIS BOOK IS
GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

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CHAPTER THE FIRST

INTRODUCTORY

How should one describe Cambridge? The question opens a thousand avenues. One might, for instance, approach her in the spirit of the depressed undergraduate with a party of inquisitorial relations. There is substance enough in the subject to supply matter for even that emergency. Cambridge Gothic alone is a theme which might support a jeremiad, kindled to indignation at the aridities of Wilkin in King's and Trinity, and touching the sublime at the new buildings of St. John's, which seem to have been dropped from on high by some huge and obscene fowl, so grossly does their bulk sprawl upon the innocent pasture, so confusedly do their lean pinnacles huddle towards the sky. Or there is entertain-

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ment to be found in the façade of Caius, towering like a South Coast hotel above the rich perfection of the Senate-house, or in the new buildings of Pembroke, to make room for whose cramped proportions and freckled surfaces the authorities were, it is said, compelled to demolish with dynamite the fifteenth-century hall and lodge which were condemned by expert opinion as too dilapidated for safe habitation. But such a treatment of the subject must inevitably degenerate into a gabble of bricks and mortar. The showman, turning to eulogy, would blush to find himself quoting Wordsworth in King's Chapel and Ruskin on the second Court of John's. And even when he had shepherded his flock to the obscurer beauties of Queen's, with its tiny red courtyards, silent, solid, and steep-roofed; shewn them Erasmus' attic, Milton's mulberry-tree, the Pepys Library, and "the College Window" (now one of the most frequented shrines of the University); told them the date of the foundation of Peterhouse and the dimensions of the Great Court of Trinity, he would still feel that they knew nothing of Cambridge as she really is, of the part she really plays in those thousand lives which pass yearly from her tutelage. Obviously, then, we must regard our city rather

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as a living institution than as an agglomeration of dead facts or architectural curiosities. We will neither profane the mystery of her stones nor brave the complexity of her records, for neither of these house the spirit we call "Cambridge." But even this resolution does not put an end to our difficulties. We are still undetermined as to the form of our analysis. Should one approach it familiarly as the arena of so many years of personal life, so many scores of friendships, so many stages of experience—as the cradle of one's personal ambitions, the nursery of one's personal deficiencies? Or should the address be of a more critical solemnity, worthy the importance of the institution to be appraised, defended, or decried? Should the mind loll as in the common talk of friend to friend, where every word begets a memory, or should one summon all the stricter powers of exposition, marshalling facts, applying formulas, distilling conclusions? Of the two alternatives there can be little doubt which will be the most agreeable to the writer. The second, with the help of encyclopædias, calendars, histories, and blue-books, were doubtless possible. But the mind shrinks from it as from a sacrilege, and since it is an axiom that no one will contemplate with zest what is begotten of disinclination, we

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can abandon the alternative without further hesitation. So far, therefore, our choice is easy. Our courting shall be in the alleys of memory, and, should it find favour, we may, without presumption, hope for the seal of love upon its issue. And it is not only inclination that commends this choice of ours. There is, besides, an essential fitness in it. For, after all, it is through the medium of memory that Cambridge exercises her most powerful influence. The little learning which most of us acquire from her is too soon forgotten. Our names may (unless the need for our "caution money" grows too imperious) remain upon our College books, and for a year or two week-end visits may keep us more or less in touch with the lives that have succeeded ours; but the various business of our own after-lives soon begins to make these visits increasingly difficult. Long before middle-age it is only an occasional "gaudy" that brings us back and shows us, at each succeeding festival, stranger faces and more alien customs. "Cambridge," after all, to most of us, means little more than a dozen or so of friendships, a hundred or so of acquaintances. Divorced from these, she loses her influence. And we cannot even look to them to preserve the recipe, for time and place are

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two of the essential ingredients. Once our friends are out of harbour, the wind of circumstance strikes them and they are scattered. Of some we hear dimly as holding sway upon the Nile or the Niger, of some as growing rich on teak in Burmese forests. Some India swallows. For a year or two we correspond fitfully, once in ten years or so we meet, and find strange men with the names of those we knew. Beards flourish upon cherubic faces. The stress of Time has drawn and hardened familiar features into a caricature of those we still regard as the reality. Forms, whose tenuity was a byword, bear down on us in the dignity of sixteen stone, and, where memory had cherished the expectation of plumpness and frivolity, we are distressed by a figure lean and sober as a hero of Henry Seton Merriman.

Nor is it much better with those of us who stay at home. A lapse of ten years sees one, who used to shepherd us to Newmarket, a Member of Parliament and director of five companies ; another, whose talent for scurrility enlivened countless dinner-tables, is on the highway to a Bishopric. Of the many who are scattered through the Midlands and the North, in the pursuit of law or commerce, we have had no news save invitations to their

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weddings. One begins to realise, too, that the mind may change, though the sky remains the same. Years extend the angles of divergence; new interests supervene: marriage comes and with it, too often, falls the glass dome which, as Mr. E. M. Forster has said, separates, without hiding, the married couple from the rest of the world. A thousand blows are aimed at the old intimacies, and a man may commend himself for constancy if, at middle-age, he retains two or three unimpaired—if there remain two or three minds whose company is able automatically to recreate the old atmosphere. For though the urgency of circumstance may confine it to the dark places of the mind, the spirit can never utterly desert us. It is always there waiting for the master word to free the bottleneck and give it leave to exercise its old dominion. All that is needed is to frame the charm, but that which comes lightly at the call of common affections and common experience is not so lightly to be coaxed between the covers of a book. It is hard to recreate that natural heritage, fruit of a thousand forgotten nothingnesses, of a thousand incidents never translated into speech, hardly even filtered into conscious realization. The mere assembling of details will not avail us. It will be useless to

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lead you from court to court ; to shew the place where number seven rode the Professor of Botany's tricycle into the river after a bump supper ; the exact point from which the captain of the golf club drove a ball over King's Chapel ; the hearths from which the *illuminati* of Trinity harangued us on the immortality of the soul ; the tables at which we tortured the Elizabethans into unsuitable metres and alien languages ; the windows through which we hauled in midnight adventurers, like lovers of romance, on a rope of twisted sheets. Neither the catalogues of Degree lists nor the allusions of College magazines will coax out our genie. After all it is in our own consciousness that he shelters. There is his element. Divorce him from it and he dwindles before the eye can apprehend him. There is no way but to evoke this element, to summarise, if one can, one's own impression, in the hope that through the uncertain haze, which curls upward from the bottle-neck across the stars, the form and gesture of a potent influence may be obscurely discernible. If we achieve so much, we shall have made as solid a contribution to reality as could be gained from the distillation of a library of facts, or the most accurate analysis of existing conditions. For, in spite of the

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rapidity with which her generations, ten times shorter than those of mortal men, succeed each other, the heart of Cambridge changes wonderfully little.

Though we no longer

“Drop at Callaby’s the Terrier
Down upon the prisoned rat ;”

though we no longer purchase

“Tiny boots of Mortlock,
And colossal prints of Roe,”

years have not a whit diminished the essential truth of Calverley’s description. We pursue customs as strange and sports no less curious. Cloth caps and smooth faces have succeeded whiskers and bowler hats ; the Pitt Club has abandoned politics and built a dining-room ; the Wrangler has gone to join the Senior Classic ; the motor-car supplants the tandem ; but the spirit remains the same. Probably, if one knew the facts, one would find little real change, beyond an improvement in manners, since the days of Gunning, when the dignitaries of the University used to jolt home in their coaches from tenants’ dinners, singing strange songs and tangled in uncouth embraces. If, therefore, we can recapture the spirit of one

A sepia-toned watercolor illustration of a bridge over a river, with a large, ornate building (likely a cathedral or university hall) in the background. The bridge has a stone railing with circular openings. The building features a large arched window and two tall, thin spires. The sky is cloudy. The artist's signature 'HARRY MORLEY' is visible in the bottom left corner.

KING'S CHAPEL AND CLARE

INTRODUCTORY

former generation, it may stand as a symbol of those which have succeeded it as well as of its predecessors. A literal picture it will not be, for even in the few years which have passed since my own brief day, there has been much change in externals. There have been deaths in high places, and changes of Government, which, even in a society so independent as a Cambridge College, involve some change in the governed. Colleges which were noted for a sane mediocrity, respectable in achievement, sober in ideals, are now the forum of every extravagance of which energy is capable. John, Gauguin, and Matisse have succeeded the mild autotypes of Titian and Raphael which once adorned their walls. Socialism has supplanted metaphysics, and even Socialism is now *démodé*. Poets and "blues" grow and flourish side by side. They contribute (probably) to *Rhythm* where we were content to polish pale lyrics for the *Cambridge Review*.

Elsewhere the process is reversed and sobriety has succeeded violence.

Magdalene, to which a few undergraduates straggled every winter to hunt with the Cambridgeshire and Fitzwilliam, is now become a seat of learning and sound culture. Before long, may be, "The Hall" will head the Triposes,

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Sidney beget a second race of Cromwells, and
Downing row head of the river.

Where the stream of Time is so intemperate,
a prudent chronicler will do well to confine
himself to the comparative certainty of personal
reminiscence.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

NOTHING is more difficult to describe with any fidelity than life at a school or University. One has only to remember the infinite labour and the infinitesimal results of the weekly letter-writing of our own boyhood. How strangely the seven days, each of which in its progress had seemed to teem with humour and incident, dwindled and disappeared at every Sunday's retrospect! The same difficulties have perplexed the novelist. School stories fall into three classes. Firstly, those which are superficial and accurate. Among these: "A Day of My Life at Eton," with its companion, "About Some Fellows," and Eden Phillpotts' "The Human Boy," stand pre-eminent, inspired with a genuine insight, which, in spite of a strong flavouring of farce, makes them almost classic. Then there are those which have sufficient superficial accuracy to carry off an improbable story. Of these the name is legion. One

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knows them well with all their common artifice of the brutal usher, the French master (of two varieties—(a) romantic and heroical, (b) foolish and treacherous), the school bully and the Head's daughter—the impossible Helen of a visionary Troy. Even the “bookie” and the public-house are dragged in to make reality doubly unreal. Lastly, there are those in which the author, by an effort of genius, has, to some extent, recreated the essential spirit of boy-life, and either done without a story altogether or succeeded in forcing an improbable one upon the reader's credulity. Here “Stalky and Co.” and “Tom Brown” lead a scanty following, though even in these the realisation is mainly objective and touches but lightly the realities of the case. University stories of any real substance are even rarer. Nearly all fall into the second class, though “The Babe, B.A.,” in spite of a spice of caricature, may be put high in the first. “Cambridge Trifles” falls far short of “A Day of My Life,” being both more superficial and less substantial. “Tom Brown at Oxford” has far less reality than the “School Days,” and there is, in fact, no book which can be regarded as doing for the undergraduate what Hughes and Kipling have done for the schoolboy. It may be that our greater distance from boyhood makes

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the writer's task easier; he has less need to consider accuracy, and distance has already begun to lend a measure of enchantment. It is, at any rate, certain that the nearer one gets to childhood, the easier a true imaginative treatment becomes. Men and women write of children with ease and read of them with avidity, and now and then some happy pen, like Mr. Kenneth Grahame's, achieves what, to the grown mind, seems the perfect mirror of its own memories—a magic glass reflecting only the pure keen lights and golden shadows of a time which is, in almost every heart, a spring of secret and perpetual romance. But the "Golden Age" is too soon troubled. Passions and ambitions invade its Arcady. Insurgencies and intestine strifes beset it, and before long the soul is launched, like an infant State, upon the unending struggle of political evolution. It is in the earlier stages of this process that the difficulty lies. The centre of interest is then entirely within the little polity of each individual spirit. Powers and desires awaken. There is insurrection, plot and counterplot, victory and triumph, defeat and shame. But there is as yet little commerce with the outside world. News of these great events, so all important to the individual State, does not cross

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the boundary. Nowhere is the censorship so strict as in the mind of the imaginative boy. He would sooner die than let any hint of realities escape him. The ceremonies of common life are strictly observed. Friendships, sometimes passionate in their intensity, are formed and die away. Enmities flourish, though less passionately. The whole soul appears to be lavished on common interests and ambitions, but still there is no commerce of realities. And this strictness of surveillance never loses its hold. Long after, when the man is grown, when the command of his forces has become so strong that the need for restrictions almost vanishes, when he has perhaps been fortunate enough to find the closest of all intimacies, when, as between his existing self and one other, every barrier seems broken down, the same jealousy asserts itself. Whenever the mind travels back towards those earlier times, the distant troubles of the growing State still seems a thing apart, sacrosanct, incommunicable. One speaks of them with difficulty and knows that, even had one the hardihood to write them down for the world to read, the world would shrink from the revelation, conscious, as it were, of an assault upon its own privacy.

Indeed, during these periods of growth,

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external events are of little real importance. The circumstances of the common life make them monotonous, while the inward interest is so strong that in the real scale of values they seem trivial almost to the point of irrelevance, and thus it comes about that no real book of boy-life is ever written. At the best one finds romances treating the boy as the successor of the child, not as the father of the man—ignoring the real spiritual action and substituting for it an action compounded of trivialities which, for the actors themselves, may in its progress have an illusory importance, but which, in the scale of true criticism, weigh lighter than air. For no good book about youth was ever written for the young. In spite of all the craftsman's labours, children will read Gulliver and old men "The Golden Age."

It is the same with the University. There the monotony of existence is even greater than at school, and, in addition, the common life even more desultory, less concentrated upon definite lines of common interest. The society is much larger and the individual becomes of more comparative importance. Real values begin to be ascertained. The insignificant develop unknown elements of character. One who was at school a pale figure,

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timid, rather tearful, to all appearances completely negligible, suddenly breaks ground as an æsthete, lives in a black room lit with silver candlesticks, preaches Blake and Leconte de Lisle, and goes abroad in strange clothes at the head of a strange following. Others, whom one had grown to regard as stereotyped in an unalterable mediocrity, suddenly blossom as orators and lead the Union, or learn to run the mile and attain to the dignity of 4.25 at Queen's. Success is sunshine to them. They throw out new shoots, and what was once a blank and stockish trunk becomes the sturdy basis of unsuspected virtues and capacities. And the process is often reversed. Minds, which had shot up into premature brilliance, die down to a sickly mediocrity. Some who, through a talent for football or some other purely physical preponderance, had towered among their fellows suddenly decline and are forgotten. The diversity of new interests and the competition of a larger world overwhelm them and they vanish. Instead of a blind throng following accepted leaders, we break into a hundred sects and alliances, in no one of which is it easy to say which personality dominates its fellows. As an individual study any one of a thousand lives might fill a volume,

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but there is no field of action to which romance can look for that interplay of character which is essential to the artist. The house match no longer inspires a patriot's fervour. The Dons live a life apart from, but not dissimilar to, our own. Between us and them there is neither tyranny nor rebellion. For the Bully even fiction can no longer find a place, and romance has yet to be woven about the Provost's daughter. Moreover, the barriers between mind and mind are still strong. True the spirit is nearer to a sure captaincy, but even now there is little real commerce. Each one's life is still his own secret which he is busy unravelling for himself. Personal relations are still of comparatively slight interest, for the mind, though less obsessed with the novelty of self-government, is becoming keenly awake to external impressions, and impressions begin to throng so fast that one takes them at random, without conscious effort, without even any deliberate selection. It is a time of intense life, but the emotions, in those characters which might have furnished the most interesting material for an analysis of action, spend themselves in an acute passivity—in an eager exploitation of the growing powers of reason and inference, which, though invaluable to

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personal development, still confines all essential action to the theatre of the individual spirit and keeps it there, incessantly involved in a blind and indecipherable interplay.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in looking back on one's three or four years at the University one finds oneself strangely unconscious of actual definite incidents. Even events of magnitude, such as a triumph or failure in the schools, an athletic success, a bad accident or illness, sink into the background, and there seems to pass between ourselves and them a kaleidoscope of infinitesimal incidents, perpetually interchanging and interacting, none important enough to achieve a separate existence, yet each playing a definite part in the shifting, indistinguishable whole. It seems impossible that one could have spent so long a time doing so little. One lived surrounded by interests, by solicitations to experience, yet, as far as conscious effort went, everything passed one by. Some impulse, no doubt, came to us occasionally from above, and in this respect the last few years have seen a decided improvement. The enlargement of the Classical Tripos has brought literature, philosophy and art to some extent within the range of practical interest. The Fitzwilliam, long a catacomb with no arrange-

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ment and little interest, is now a treasure-house directed with courtesy and learning. Mr. Dent and Mr. Rootham have put new life into music and given London a lesson in the production of Mozart; Fabian forays have stimulated political controversy. Undergraduate societies act the Elizabethans with a temerity and zest for which one would gladly exchange half the dexterities of the conventional theatre. Yet one may surmise that these new energies touch the real heart of Cambridge but little. For the cause of our indifference lay beyond the reach of external stimulus. Indifferent we were—we of the common herd—and indifference one may surmise is the portion of our successors. How few of us were there who ever went to a meeting at Newmarket, heard the King's choir (otherwise than under compulsion), saw the inside of the round church or the Fitzwilliam Museum, knew that there were windows by Burne-Jones in Jesus Chapel and Peterhouse—that Mr. S. H. Day was not the only distinguished member of Erasmus' College, or Mr. Gilbert Jessop of Milton's? How few of us ever deliberately acquired any single piece of information as to the history of the particular institution to which we delighted to belong, or of the many great and fascinating

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persons who had lived through the same experiences in the same courtyards, possibly in the same rooms, as ourselves? How few of us ever looked at a newspaper for anything but the sporting news, or read a book outside the narrow scope of our enforced study, or took the faintest interest in politics, or, indeed, in anything which did not directly concern ourselves or those immediately about us? Yet we were busy enough in mind and body. We must have seemed like some great army of insects hurrying to and fro, one bearing in his mouth a half-formed idea, another toiling athletically under a huge and useless burden, one gathering grain, another laboriously piling chaff, all circling, pushing, climbing, burrowing, all ceaselessly intent upon some great design, the purport and unity of which defied common observation and was but unconsciously apprehended in the blind motions of those tiny brains which so indefatigably pursued it. There is an obvious difficulty in dealing at all comprehensively with any life so manifold, so vague, so apparently purposeless, so continually changing. The essence of it, one fears, must always elude analysis, and to devote too great attention to the details of its elements, the thousand nothingnesses of every day which unite to form the whole, would be

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both tedious and confusing. One must content oneself with a more or less random treatment of those aspects of it which the natural course of reminiscence brings into the mind's focus, and hope that chance lights thrown on the confusion, haphazard memories, casual reflections, will combine to make a more or less coherent picture of a subject which presents but little unity either to experience or recollection.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE INEVITABLE COMPARISON

ONE of the chief difficulties which beset the describer of Oxford or Cambridge is that he has nothing to which he can compare either of them except the other. And, moreover, when he comes to attempt a comparison, he finds in almost every point of detail a wide divergence. One can tell an Oxford man from a Cambridge man almost at a glance. There is about the first a greater alertness of manner, a more conscious efficiency, a higher polish, which seem to have come from a closer and more rapid commerce with the world. He is full of opinions and of the ability to defend them. He sets his mind at yours with a conscious briskness which seems to foreknow victory. He uses his culture like a weapon always drawn—with a flourish wonderfully easy and graceful, that is none the less a flourish, reminding you continually that with him culture *is* a weapon, not flesh of his flesh, not an end in itself, but

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a means to an end, another stick to beat the world with. One may well envy him his aptitude and concentration, the dexterity with which he marshals his forces, his easy answer to the call of circumstance, and the confidence with which the realisation of his own powers legitimately inspires him. His trim dress and carefully poised voice, his brisk movements and the precise elaboration of his speech, all seem deliberately and yet easily accomplished, all part of his armoury, weapons fit for his confident attack upon the universe. Not even the world-old traditions, the crumbling towers and quiet quadrangles of his own city, have succeeded in luring him into the past. Not even the study of *Litteræ Humaniores* has seduced him into abstraction; not even the rich seclusion of the Thames Valley has availed to enervate him: he has pressed all into the service of his own ambitions.

Typical of Oxford, and its ingenious and elaborate conspiracy against fortune, is the College of All Souls. It consists solely of fellows, who are chosen nominally on the results of an examination in history and law—subjects, it will be observed, essential to a man of affairs, but neither of them of the first importance academically. Besides this the

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candidates are invited to dine at the high table, and it is said that this ordeal—in reality an examination in tact and manners—has as great a bearing on the result as the other more conventional test. Once elected, the successful candidate (there are two every year) becomes entitled to rooms, commons and hall, but he is not expected to reside or teach, the college having, in fact, no collegiate life of any kind, but existing solely for the maintenance of the fellows who are its only members. He goes out into the world fortified with his annual subsidy, and comes up for week-ends as often as he can spare time, in the certain hope of meeting round the high table successful barristers, rising politicians, professors, schoolmasters and others whom this ingenious conjuration has forced upon the world, and who are only too anxious to do the same service to their successors.

All Souls is typical of Oxford; but it was the Oxford spirit which created her, not she that produced it. Where, then, are we to look for the true source of that creation? Was it Jowett who bequeathed to the Oxford man the legacy of these strange powers? Was it from his precise and seraphic cynicism that this race of divine worldlings was begotten to inherit the

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earth, or are they both but products of the same forces? At least one may affirm the kinship between them, and Jowett of Balliol and Thompson of Trinity may well stand in contrast to each other as embodiments of the spirit of their respective societies. Not that Thompson's grinding irony is in any way characteristic of Cambridge, but there was something in his rugged abstraction and unbending indifference to common valuations which is typical of one of the highest aspects of Cambridge life. For though Cambridge studies less philosophy than Oxford, though she stands not cramped in a steaming valley but in a wide place swept and purged by every wind of heaven, yet she breeds more philosophy and a more passive spirit in her children. Her ancient houses dominate less nobly the streets of the surrounding city, about which they lie scattered behind discreet walls and modest gardens. The hand of restoration has been heavier upon her, the calls of science in all its branches have met with a readier response at her hands, as many a bleak laboratory and lecture-room bear witness. She draws her children, too, from a wider circle in which the great public school tradition plays a less important part. Yet, in spite of all this, Cam-

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bridge is less of the world than Oxford and more definitely of the past. Something perhaps is due to the vast spaces of the plain on the face of which our forefathers planted her. On that expanse where every molehill commands blue distances and pigmy man walks every hour beneath the complete vault of heaven witness of the whole compass of its interminable splendour, the mind's eye insensibly turns upward. In a land arched by the whole circuit of day's naked splendours, ringed by all the legionary fires of night, shadowed by the full concourse of flying tempests, lit from rim to rim with the flush of dawn and evening, her generations have grown to a certain breadth, a certain austerity of temper foreign to her more worldly rival, a temper with more reserve, with a power of enthusiasm keener if less sustained, less human perhaps and less responsive to the calls of practical life, but nearer in kinship to the winds and stars.

There are other things, too, which contribute to this condition—some, perhaps, are also symptomatic of it. Our river is no full stream leading the imagination on past mansions, towns, and castles to the city of dreams. No Parliaments are mirrored in its narrow waters, no fleets of commerce or destruction ply its

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estuary. Ambition hoists no sail upon its shallows. The mind has but to look upon those larger currents, and in a flash the flood has twitched it from the bank, and whirled it seawards like a leaf. The whole city seems to stride their broad back armed for adventure; ready at any moment, if the great beast should spring forward, to ride off into the world. Our river has no such magic of command. What life it has it borrows from the proud gates and stately trees that tower about its banks, from the springing bridges and high gardens that watch their own shadows in its noiseless stream. No hope of conquest wings it forward. Rather it seems to wind regretfully and slow as loath to leave the green and shady reaches of its birth, loath to lose the protection of those grey walls and quiet lawns to which it owes its beauty and its name. Our town, too, though the University dominates it less, though her stones frown less sternly upon its streets, about which they lie dispersed with a kind of modest geniality, yet contributes not a little by its nature to the University's pre-eminence and isolation. It has no raw suburbs stretching lean fingers into the surrounding country. Heaven has spared us a Banbury Road, and what villas have been necessitated by the

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fellows' too frequent lapses from celibacy, lie scattered irregularly about the rising ground near Newnham and on the way to Trumpington and Madingley, veiled in a becoming modesty of hedge and garden. Its quieter beauties have less to attract the tourist, and, except for May week and the annual American invasion, we know comparatively little contact with the outer world. Ours is a town and not a city, and, considerably smaller than Oxford though it is, it yet supports a larger University. Its centre is the sloping, cobbled market-place, hedged round irregularly with little formal houses of brown brick that are shops below and above rise piled to varying heights with University lodgings. To this point converge all the narrow twisting streets, and hither, too, are drawn at infrequent intervals the two tiny creeping horse trams—strange vehicles which, to senses accustomed to the sliding monsters that clang and whistle through our modern cities, seem incongruous as reindeer sledges. Every street is compact of shops and lodgings; tailors, hosiers, tobacconists, bootmakers, set their flagrant snares for youth in every alley. Youth in cap and gown, youth in flannels, youth in breeches, youth in shorts, youth in pumps, and youth in gaiters, lounges or hurries

THE
MARKET PLACE



THE MARKET PLACE

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THE INEVITABLE COMPARISON

along every pavement and in and out of every doorway. Indeed, the whole town appears to live on and for the University alone. Even the market-place, core of whatever independent life the town can boast, seems to slope up in supplication to the disdainful back of the University Church. The only parts of the town that are free of the influence are wholly featureless—the long and lamentable thoroughfare that runs to the station, enlivened only, at intervals, by the desperate races of hansom cabs carrying youth *ventre à terre*, with oath and cracking whiplash, to catch the parting train; Barnwell, with its deserts of drab brick; the dank purlieus of the lower river, are like chill exhalations of the central sun, inhabited, one may suppose, by the pale waiters who run and stumble about our college halls, the few cabbies who still survive the onslaught of the taximeter, the touts who lurk at street corners to sell us puppy dogs, and the “bed-makers” who are rumoured to maintain husbands and large families in luxury and idleness upon our leavings.

In such a citadel we are, as it were, fenced against the world, free to make what discoveries we can about the problem of life that lies before us, free to take such steps as we please

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to fit us to encounter it, free to waste our time or to use it, to make our own valuations without too strong a bias on the world's side of the scale. Freedom and detachment seem part of the genius of the place, principles of which even authority has recognised, albeit a little blindly, the inherent fitness. The two great Triposes were (until recent changes) models of abstraction. A man might leave the University with the highest honours, able to write Greek and Latin in the manner of half a dozen selected authors, with a working knowledge of the most minute intrigues of Greek and Roman politics, primed with the latest and most fashionable views on etymology (which he would fortunately forget almost as soon as they were abandoned by the learned), yet knowing no more of the essence of ancient thought, of the real achievement of ancient art, than he did when he passed the "Little Go." What nourishment his soul desired it must seek outside the routine of study. And although the extent of ground to be covered left him little time to dally by the way, a man of character and curiosity often profited by the independence which the system allowed him.

It was the same with the ordinary course of

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college government. At Oxford the control was stricter in spite of a superficial appearance of license—in reality a safety-valve necessitated by the strictness of the system. At Cambridge our Dons made no pretence of joining in our occasional and innocuous excesses. They politely ignored them, and did not help us to light a bonfire in the quad one night and fine us for burning their furniture the next. None the less, we could always get a night's leave on any reasonable excuse. If a man was working he was allowed considerable latitude in the matter of lectures and chapels. Discipline was maintained by a system of mutual toleration. The Dons and ourselves kept to our separate worlds and, as long as a reasonable standard of conduct was maintained on both sides, did not interfere with one another.

It is among such influences as these that the essential spirit of Cambridge develops, with its good and its evil characteristics. Among the good we may count a certain independence and spiritual honesty, an idealism able to rise above the grosser forms of self-interest, an intellectual tolerance of everything except (one must admit the qualification) the lack of intelligence. In the evil must be reckoned a certain in-

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humanity among the intellectual, and an aimlessness, which comes of too diffuse a culture, unguided by intellectual prejudice or material ambition. One sees, too often, a man capable of brilliant things drifting into an obscure place in the Civil Service and (for want of any impulse to apply them to a definite purpose) going contentedly through a life which makes no call upon his full faculties—his mind too widely dispersed to allow of any active exercise of his capabilities. The same weakness appears in another form among the less gifted, who, not being strong enough for independence, often fail to achieve that concentration which comes most easily through a rigid adherence to conventional ideals and an unthinking devotion to common ambitions. An excessive diffusion is the fault of Cambridge, an excessive concentration that of Oxford. One sees the contrast in the very dress and habit of their children. Where Oxford is all briskness, polish, and activity, Cambridge is marked by a certain carelessness of demeanour, by slow movements, deliberate, though irregular, speech, and occasional freaks of manner, such as grow upon men who live alone. Even among the great majority, who most approximate to a common type, there is a lack of common characteristics.

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The hand of the drill sergeant is noticeably absent, and one observes a diversity of dress and manner, which denotes not so much a greater development of individuality as a less concentrated discipline of the corporate body.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

TRINITY

THE dominating and distinctive feature of Cambridge is Trinity, for Trinity not only has a greater name than any other college ; not only is it recognised by both local and general opinion as leader of the University, it is also twice as large as any other college, and four or even six times the size of many. The whole University contains 3,300 undergraduates, and of these Trinity numbers over 550. It has six courts (besides the rooms in Garrett Hostel), comprising 316 sets of rooms, which can yet accommodate only about three eighths of its total number, and until recently the capacity of its Hall was so inadequate that its members had to dine in three relays, of which the first, comprising the unfortunate freshmen, must herd to their meal at 6 o'clock. The fact of so large an institution existing in, and to some extent setting the tone to, the rest of the University must, of course, have

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a considerable effect upon the whole, and it will be worth while to examine in some detail what are the dominant characteristics of the great miscellaneous corporation which we call Trinity. In the first place, it is obvious that its great family must comprise an enormous variety of species. In this respect the diversity of its many buildings offers a pleasant analogy. The diversity begins even in the Great Court, no one side of which is like another; none of its angles are right angles; the covered fountain which forms its centre stands a considerable distance away from the real central point, and it is crossed by oblique and irregular paths. The great turreted gate of rich brown brick, under which the visitor usually enters the Great Court from Trinity Street, was half finished before 1535, the second story being added at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The gate opens into the court at a point considerably to the north of the centre of the wing which it pierces. Immediately opposite to the visitor as he enters the court is the hexagonal fountain, built by Thomas Neville, Master of the College, in 1602, a beautiful piece of Renaissance stonework, perfect from the proportions of its six classical columns to the woven decoration of its tapering cover; beyond that again

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the Master's Lodge, the southern half of which was undertaken immediately after the first story of the great gate, and the northern (now restored, after being defaced under Bentley with a classical façade) added by Neville. Next to, and south of, the Master's Lodge is the College Hall, also built under Neville, while the north wing of the court which joins the lodge on the other side contains, at the east end, the chapel put up between 1550 and 1570, a building externally of comparatively small interest, the west window of which is blocked by the massive stone gateway of Edward III., and, to the north of the gateway, a recently uncovered fragment of the fourteenth-century King's Hall. The south side of the court contains, approximately in its centre, the fine brick Queen's Gate, also Neville's work, while for the rest these main features are connected with low stone buildings of three stories, the south-west corner being debauched by a horrible eighteenth-century addition, black-faced and barren as a London police-station. At the south end of the chapel a low, heavy doorway of studded wood opens into Neville's Court, perhaps the most engaging of all the Cambridge quadrangles. Steps descend into it from the Hall, which stands higher on this side than on that facing the Great Court, with a



THE GREAT COURT OF TRINITY.

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noble oriel of small-paned windows reaching from the steep pitched roof to the ground at the north end, and a classical porch in the centre, so generous in design that the eye ignores the fact that it contains no door and was obviously foisted on the Hall by Wren to secure unity with his library at the opposite end of the court. The library, a solid rectangular building composed of a curious pinkish stone, worked in large slabs of singularly varying colour, is nobly raised on a broad double arcade of rounded columns, through the grilled windows at the back of which the eye looks out from cool darkness on to the vivid green meadows that slope down to the river. This cloister is continued round the grass-laid court on a single row of columns and surmounted by two stories of rooms, the whole, though originally built under Neville, having been refaced in the eighteenth century in a style which, though essentially inferior to the quiet gables and rich pilasters of the Renaissance plan, is solid, sound, and admirably connects Wren's Library with the Renaissance Hall. The rooms above the north side of this spacious cloister, merely to walk in which is to feel the soul expanded and refreshed, are among the most delightful in Cambridge. Large, cool, and lit with a pleasant dimness becoming their antiquity,

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they look on one side down into the quiet of the court, and on the other over luxuriant gardens and grey chimney-stacks to the river and St. John's. How pleasantly could one (and have not many done so?) dream away one's life in one of these broad chambers, dozing over old books in a halo of tobacco smoke, pacing at mid-day through the sounding cloister down to the green waterside, pacing in the evening shadow between the darkening columns through the heavy swing-door into Hall, hardly more sentient than those happy stones, which seem indeed to have sucked something more vital than a merely passive contentment from the progress of their drowsy centuries !

Through the south side of the arcade one passes into another world. Never was bastard Gothic less appositely placed than here next to Wren's infallible dignity, and at King's opposite the gigantic individuality of the chapel. Let us leave the blasphemy as coolly as we can and, passing through the sound red brick of Garrett Hostel which juts out into the open way like a doctor's house in a Midland market town, go down the lane past the solid grey chimney-bases that pillar from behind the south side of the Great Court, and round to Whewell's Court, the entrance to which is in

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Trinity Street, nearly opposite the Great Gate. Whewell's Court (built, as its name suggests, under the great Doctor of the mid-nineteenth century) consists of three little dark courtyards of gloomy stone, composed in what one may suppose their designers conceived to be the Gothic manner. Like other buildings of their time, they have the merit neither of beauty nor convenience. Happily an odd arrangement of drainage gratings has given a handle to undergraduate humour, which has labelled one of the little wells "the spittoon" and one the "billiard-table," names the curious aptitude of which may beguile our passage through the waste places they adorn.

In this jumble of the centuries, where beauty jostles tastelessness and meanness and dignity herd together, are housed continually some 300 fellows, bachelors, and undergraduates, comprising almost a hundred scholars, while over 400 more pupils and teachers flock thither daily from their scattered lodgings in the town. Some of the most famous names in the world of scholarship are written over its doors. There is scarcely a branch of learning or investigation that is not pursued behind its narrow windows or expounded in its dark lecture-rooms, scarcely a species of zeal or eccentricity that does not

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find shelter and nourishment within its ambit. The college often puts on as many as six boats in both the May and Lent races, has three cricket teams, and as many at both Rugby and Association football, besides furnishing old Etonian, old Harrovian, and other miscellaneous clubs, running a pack of beagles, and supporting representative teams in other branches of sport too numerous to mention. Lesser clubs also arise within it from time to time to supply the needs of those who do not care for the more arduous discipline of college competitions. And all of these persons and institutions have, of course, their servants and dependents. A regiment of porters, waiters, bed-makers, "gyps," and cooks of varying importance subsist upon them, while the chef is said to drive a carriage and pair and have sons at Oxford.

In a society so large it is, of course, impossible for all the members to have any acquaintance with each other. Indeed, there are only a few porters who know every member of the college even by sight, and they have to devote themselves to the study as to a branch of scholarship. One of the most important consequences of the size and variety of the institution is, of course, a decided weakening

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of the common ties of association. The college is too large to form a social unit, or to evolve a common type. Indeed, so faint is the tie, that in many cases Trinity men deliberately choose to live out of college, preferring the greater comfort of lodgings to the more Spartan life inside the college gates. Elsewhere rooms in college are eagerly sought for and relinquished with reluctance, for it is only in them that the full flavour of common life and common interests can be enjoyed. For a Trinity man, however, the life of the college has fewer attractions. There is no sort of general intimacy, but men soon form into small sets, attracted together by some bond of common interest or personal attraction. Their special football club, the boat club (Third Trinity) which they share with Westminster (usually a sleeping partner), the "Pitt" and the "A.D.C.," to which many of them belong, all help to keep old Etonians to some extent a separate body. Old Harrovians, too, herd more or less together, and the Scottish schools, fierce devotees of Rugby football, form another small circle, while sporting men, whose main interests are in the beagles, the neighbouring hunts and an occasional visit to Newmarket or Cottenham, drift into a common circle, breakfasting early

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and dining late together, to make leisure for their arduous amusements, and growing gradually into a similarity of dress and even of feature, symbolical of their common interests. The boating men, confined to a stern discipline and barbarous dietary, are also forced by necessity into a separate, though not always very harmonious, existence, while the scholars and younger fellows, with other men more or less devoted to studious or intellectual pursuits, form yet further groups, crystallising often into small debating and essay societies, whose interminable discussions, stimulated with tea, whisky and tobacco, reverse the functions of the night and day. Other groups there are, too, in which it is almost impossible to analyse the bond. In some it seems to amount to little more than a common appetite for wasting time. A dozen or so of very agreeable fellows belong to the same scratch cricket or football club, play squash rackets or golf together three or four times a week, meet round the bridge-table of an evening, breakfast with each other and spend the (often exiguous) time which intervenes between breakfast and lunch in discussing the cricket results and strumming the latest comic opera on a hired piano.

As a result of this diversity of life, Trinity

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CALIFORNIA



TRINITY GREAT GATE

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produces a great variety of types, but none especially distinctive of itself. The little factions live in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. There is no common ideal to which all are expected to conform, and, even if athletes and intellectuals feel and express a rather arrogant contempt for one another, the expression is confined to the circle which gives it birth. There is no open conflict. One does not hear of rooms being "ragged" or of public opinion, incensed by some eccentricity of dress or opinion, throwing its possessor into the river or the college fountain. Life at Trinity is marked by a certain tolerance, a certain decorum, which find their reward in a higher gravity and a greater variety of individual development than would be possible in a more concentrated society.

These characteristics show themselves also in another result which is wholly excellent, a marked weakening of the public school tradition. One may acknowledge with gratitude the part played by our great schools in the formation of a respect for public opinion and the inculcation of habits of discipline, while at the same time recognising that their discipline is too often destructive of personal development, and that the public opinion which they create is not governed by very lofty ideals. When

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all is said and done, the only thing which they really respect is athletic distinction, and even this is not admired unless it be accompanied by a certain conventional polish, a general air of doing what everyone else does, only doing it a little better. The slightest hint of a different standard and public opinion is forfeited. We leave school slaves of the bat and ball, of the angle of a hat and the cut of a trouser—some vague ideals of finer quality we may have, but they lie too deep, too discreetly guarded to have much potency. At Trinity athletes are as plentiful as blackberries. An exquisite, who captained the field at Eton, finds himself in point of athletic distinction infinitely inferior to a full back from Aldenham or a forward from Hurstpierpoint. His old passports to success lose their validity; he becomes merely one of the herd, and sees with surprise others who scarce know a football from an air-balloon generally recognised as rational beings. He finds himself surrounded by persons of his own age, the vast majority of whom are ignorant of his very existence. Even if his athletic successes continue, the fact seems to escape general observation. He becomes conscious that the world holds other interests; he may even begin to doubt whether some of them may not be

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superior to his own. For some the discovery is too great a shock. They never succeed in adapting themselves to their new environment.

Life seems aimless; they pine for lack of admiration and disappear. For the majority, on the other hand, the release from the old bondage is a happy one. Insensibly their lives grow broader; they find new interests; existence acquires new meanings. Indeed, the danger is that the solicitations of new experience may prove too powerful, and the mind, freed from the accustomed blinkers and leading-strings, dissipate itself in the pursuit of new interests and unforeseen pleasures, a fate which sometimes besets the studious as well as the more frivolously inclined. For it is not uncommon to see a man of real brilliance, grown perhaps too suddenly aware of the new worlds open to him, throwing himself heart and soul into a veritable orgy of reading and argument. The ordinary academic routine cannot supply the nourishment which his mind demands, and he puts it on one side. Numberless reading, debating, and other societies open their gates to him. He spends his evenings drifting from one to the other, and dawn perhaps finds him still hammering at some stubborn question in a friend's room, drinking strong tea and smoking

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innumerable pipes. Where the mind is strong enough to assimilate and digest the farrago of opinions and arguments which result from these perpetual and miscellaneous symposia, the process forms an excellent training; but even so it leads to a neglect of practical issues which may in an individual case have disastrous consequences. Lack of preparation results in a low place in the Tripos. The chance of a fellowship disappears, and if, as is usually the case, the scholar has no independent means, there seems no opening except in the direction of schoolmastering (a dismal prospect enough for one who cannot hope to rise above a second-rate school) or the Civil Service. The second alternative wins the day; but it is too late to make up the lost ground, even if the mind is still capable of the application necessary to secure a practical mastery of the innumerable subjects required for that terrible examination. Another comparative failure follows, and the unfortunate finds himself banished to a remote province of Ceylon, or condemned to a melancholy and obscure routine in Somerset House or the Local Government Board.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE SMALLER COLLEGES

LIFE in the smaller colleges proceeds on a very different plan. Only two of these, St. John's and Caius, in any degree approach the size of Trinity, the former containing 270 undergraduates and bachelors and ninety resident Masters of Arts, the latter 275 and sixty respectively in each category. The average number of undergraduates and bachelors in a small college ranges from one hundred and fifty to two hundred. In such a society it is plainly possible for every member to know every other member at least by sight, while it is not difficult for the authorities to have a working knowledge of every person *in statu pupillari*. In this state of things the conditions of school life tend to reproduce themselves more exactly than at Trinity. There is a much stronger common tie. The doings of the boats and the football and cricket teams, which really represent the college where the Trinity teams and clubs only stand for various

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sections and combinations of the whole, become of much greater common interest. In some of the smallest colleges the men must undertake herculean toils for the honour of the institution, and the same hero may figure in the Rugby and Association football teams, play cricket, hockey, golf, run and jump, and even now and then take a place in the college boat. In such a case, of course, the *esprit de corps* is a very genuine power. The same spirit, though of course to a lesser extent, rules in regard to the Triposes. The college cannot help being, in some degree, proud of a man who wins a high place. Work and play are no longer, as at school, in watertight compartments. Almost everyone realises that, sooner or later, he himself will have to do some modicum of work, even if it only consists in being spoon-fed by a coach until he knows his Greek play and gospel so well by heart that the physical aspect of the original infallibly reminds him of the corresponding passage in the "crib." In a college, such as King's, where all the men have to take honours, and are from time to time tested with examinations (brutally miscalled by the pleasant name of "Mays") to see that they are keeping up to the necessary standard, this spirit is of course doubly strong. One finds in consequence, in the smaller colleges,

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a very genuine common life, more genuine than at school where common ambitions are narrowed to a single and unworthy field, and infinitely more tolerant. None the less, the spirit of toleration is far from complete. The example of Trinity, with its generous outlook and wide ambitions, undoubtedly influences the smaller bodies to a considerable extent, but the conditions differ widely from those of the larger foundation, and the difference is reflected in the characteristics of the common life. Society in a small college falls much less definitely into sets and coteries, and tends much more to be dominated by the point of view of the majority. This condition of affairs has been well summed up in the epigram (attributed, I believe, to Mr. E. M. Forster), that society in a small college consists of two cliques, the exclusive and the excluded. To supplement this apophthegm, the latter division must be subdivided into two classes—those who do, and those who do not desire inclusion. So far the formation is not unlike the common organisation of school society, but the ideals which determine it are happily a great deal more advanced. The exclusive, of course, stand for convention, but it is very difficult to define exactly what that convention embodies. It is certainly no longer

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the athletic convention. An athlete has, no doubt, an easier access to the charmed circle than a common man, but he has no sure passport, and even a "blue" will sometimes be found outside the pale. On the other hand, it need hardly be said that the qualification is not an intellectual one. Intellectual interests are no longer an absolute bar, as they are apt to be at school, but they must pay their tribute to convention. Birth, money, good looks, good clothes, are none of them a talisman, though a man blest with any of these assets has, *pro tanto*, the odds in his favour. None the less, one has known a prince among the excluded, and wealth, white waistcoats and straight noses languishing in the desert. The qualification is, in fact, a purely social one, and its nature is strictly conditioned by circumstance. Cambridge society is essentially male. The students of Newnham and Girton, though they attend some of the University lectures, are kept more or less strictly to themselves, and play no part in undergraduate life. So much is this the case that a few years since some malicious Trinity scholars were able to play an elaborate practical joke upon an undergraduate who had conceived a romantic admiration for a fair Newnhamite, seen at some lecture which they both attended.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100



SIDNEY SUSSEX COLLEGE

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By means of a fellow-conspirator at Newnham, a cousin of one of the organisers of the plot, an elaborate and entirely fictitious correspondence was carried on between the lover and the unconscious object of his affections. Meetings were arranged at desolate country railway-stations and other inconvenient places where the unhappy man languished through hours of expectation, the lady, of course, being always prevented by some unforeseen circumstance from attending. An irate (and, of course, fabulous) parent joined the correspondence in due course, and his threatened visits to Trinity kept the lover in a state of constant trepidation. Eventually a grand *dénouement* was organised, in which one scholar of Trinity (now a pillar of the Civil Service) was to figure as the enamoured lady and to be carried off by her lover in a dog-cart, which the infuriated father, impersonated by a gentleman now well known in the Church, was to pursue across the Gogmagogs in a swifter vehicle. The programme, I believe, included an accident to the runaways' trap at a lonely part of the road, and other ingenious and dramatic developments, all, unhappily, prevented by the premature disclosure of the plot, which, none the less, furnishes an instructive example of the relations between the ladies' colleges and

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the rest of the University. The isolation of the undergraduate is made more complete by the absence of any large residential population such as that which has settled upon the outskirts of Oxford. The Cambridge man, beyond an occasional call or dinner at "The Lodge" or at the villa of some married Don, is free from the temptations of miscellaneous society. There are no shrewd mothers to organise tennis and water parties. There are no University belles to practise with unwearying zeal upon the hearts of successive generations. The annual festivities of May week do no more than ruffle the smooth current of our daily life. Even then, so unaccustomed are we to the demands of female society, that many of us flee from it and either go down before the merrymaking has reached an acute stage, or withdraw into our own rooms to spend the hours at bridge or some other grave pastime, letting the unwonted inundation flow beneath our windows ineffectual and, as far as possible, unobserved. Indeed, practically none of us make any cult of female society, except the few who spend laborious days entertaining to tea the swiftly successive constellations of the New Theatre, organising beauty prizes for the less staid fairies of the Barnwell Circus, or

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practising more primitive forms of flirtation across the private bars of the Blue Boar or Bird-in-Hand.

Under these circumstances undergraduate society has grown to be as distinctively male as that of a public school. Conversation as an art has no place in it. The interchange of thought remains a more or less serious matter, confined among the conventional to the more immediate subjects of common interest. In the majority of cases this, of course, results in "shop" of one kind or another, though the continual intersection of varying interests makes the too pronounced insistence on any particular class of "shop" unpopular, a feeling which tells against the rowing man, whose language is apt to be marked by an arrogant technicality that tends to cut him off more or less completely from his fellows. "Shop," however, in one form or another, supplemented by the thousand personal details of a daily intercourse which is always on the verge of intimacy, forms the solid basis of every day communication. Where relaxation is needed, high spirits find it not in the *fiorituri* of polite conversation, not in the free range of fancy or the interplay of wit, but in cruder jests and more antic humours. It is in such a society as this that our aspirant to the insignia

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of the exclusives must learn to move with geniality and good humour and without self-consciousness. He must have a genuine sympathy with the common interests, and be ready to give and take in the current measure. Unless he can achieve this, no distinction, whether athletic, intellectual, social, or moral, will avail him anything. A little money is also, of course, indispensable. Not that there is any conscious respect for money, but, without a modicum of it, a man cannot meet his fellows on equal terms. A certain amount of modest hospitality is necessary; some of the more prodigal keep open house, with whisky, cigarettes, and other attractions always ready for the chance visitor. Such a practice is fatal to any academic ambition, for the hospitable person's rooms soon become no better than a private bar, whither one repairs unblushingly at any time of the night or day, in the certainty of finding a friend or two with whom to wile away a vacant hour. From tea-time, when men begin to come in from the field or the river, until three or four in the morning his rooms are never empty. From nine to twelve they generally form the scene of an impromptu concert, at which we listen, night after night, with unvarying satisfaction, to the same people

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singing the same songs, enlivened at intervals by the irruption of stray revellers from some bump supper or undergraduate dinner-party, who vary the sobriety of our proceedings with shout and dance and all the exuberance of hilarity which youth can find in a bottle of champagne. But Cambridge hospitality has one feature as excellent as it is uncommon. It looks for no return. Those who can afford large entertainment expect nothing for it beyond the immediate pleasure of the few hours of its duration. A man need not shrink from accepting it because he knows he will be unable to pay it back. Such entertainment as is necessary is of that inevitable kind which has become, as it were, part of the atmosphere of the society in which we move. One must have cigarettes and whisky, and be able to invite a few friends to coffee after hall, to breakfast, to tea and buttered buns, to lunch after lecture or before playing golf. We are not conscious that it is expected of us; we do it half unconsciously, as we wear our clothes and regulate our manner. One would as soon grow a beard and wear a top hat on Sunday, as pretermite so obvious and universal a practice. Such hospitality, however, requires a very modest outlay, and I should say there is no college in Cambridge where it is

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not possible for a good manager (who has not to keep himself in vacation) to live the conventional life with comparative comfort on £180 to £200 a year. It is indeed a life almost perfectly designed for the man of ordinary powers and ordinary ambitions. The close contact with so many minds of different upbringing, different tastes, and different capacities, the freedom of intercourse and discipline, the competition of varying interests and duties, mimic with an excellent fidelity the dangers and necessities of the greater world; the mind, almost without any conscious process of absorption, learns a tolerance and sanity which lead it insensibly towards a truer valuation than the rigid codes of school can teach it; and the common life has at the same time a concentration and definition of purpose, which prevent that dissipation of energies so often a feature of life in the larger society. A certain amount, of course, depends on the character of the leaders of the conventional brotherhood, and the smaller the college the more is this the case, and the easier it becomes for a few rough and intolerant spirits to corrupt the general tone; but for the most part the population of the little commonwealth is too large. It has sufficient elements of good to keep the others



THE RIVER AT CLARE.

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THE SMALLER COLLEGES

in check ; the troublesome ones grow more and more isolated, sink more and more into the background, and are finally driven to take refuge in nefarious alliances out of college. Where, as is usually the case, the general tone is good, the conventional life of a small college seems a kind of apotheosis of boyhood. It has the secret of perpetual youth, nourished perpetually by the clarity and liveliness of youth's perennial spring. The ordinary mind, untroubled by over-anxious thought and over-violent emotion, swims quickly out of the dark places of adolescence. We are out of the rocks and bask between sunny pastures, unconscious as yet of the imminent shadow of the waiting world, ignorant as yet of the deserts which our energies must traverse, and the servitude they must undergo in the lifelong traffic of mankind.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE EXCLUDED

BUT the life of the exclusives has its limitations. Perpetual youth made a Kindergarten of Olympus, and it is impossible to acquit the habits of the ordinary undergraduate of a certain vacuity. For him the University is hardly better than the school as a generator of ideas. He may (thanks to recent innovations) go out into the world with a working knowledge of law, agriculture, or engineering ; he will have acquired a certain adaptability and a certain tolerance, the unconscious power of presenting smooth surfaces to the friction of the world ; but he will take with him only the faintest conception of the meaning of life, of its real values, of any reliable standard for testing the permanence of its pleasures. Indeed, the academic system is based upon the ineradicable principle which underlies our whole scheme of education. It avoids, as far as possible, the stimulation of thought (the only possible justification of a purely classical system)

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and confines itself, as far as positive teaching goes, to the merely abstract, which cannot influence action, and the severely practical, which, being designed merely for the production of technical efficiency, cannot influence it socially or ethically. As for the art of living, that is best taught by herding the disciples together, and leaving them to think it out for themselves, say our theorists, oblivious of the fact that the last thing to which youth, so herded, turns its mind, is the why, the how, or the wherefore of existence. It is this weakness in the position of the exclusives that makes the cleavage between them and the second class of the excluded—those, that is, who do not desire inclusion. As for the others who are excluded against their own desire, they present no features of any interest; a few of them may find their way into the opposite camp, but, for the rest, they have too little common character or intrinsic interest to repay analysis. We may, therefore, confine the term “excluded” to the second class, bearing in mind that the positive act, which the word implies, exists rather in the imagination of the exclusives than in any basis of reality. Indeed, the excluded are apt to outdo even the antagonists in arrogance. Newly conscious as they are of the mystery and

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opulence of life, newly fired by the lust for knowledge and true experience, their old ideals and old valuations are, in a moment, jettisoned, and the spectacle of others still burdened with the lumber which they themselves have discarded, fills them with fury and contempt. The result of such an attitude of mind is familiar in the larger world. It is no different at Cambridge, though the contiguity of the opposite factions leads, perhaps, to an even greater exaggeration of feeling. The excluded regard with disgust the perpetual pursuit and discussion of competitive pleasures. Now and then, a man gifted with a natural aptitude for one of these forms of amusement will make use of his talent, but he will do so rather as an act of bravado—to show that his contempt is not due to incapacity. For the rest, the discovery that the mind is capable of truer and more intense pleasures diverts the whole channel of desire. The same spirit shows itself in other spheres. The excluded revolts no less fiercely against the thin and unvarying stream of ordinary conversational intercourse. He has discovered unknown capacities of the mind, depths unsuspected, heights unexplored; and the common leisure, the common heedlessness, seem to him a crime. Even the external symptoms of the conventional

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attitude excite his fury. He lets his hair grow, and eschews unguents. He goes clad in desperate garments. He cuts chapel because it is the rule to go there, more than for any scruple of the conscience; he cuts lectures because the conventional attend them. His austerity of living has no ethical significance, but is part of a protest against an established order, and if the extravagance of youth occasionally misleads him into intemperance, the lapse is either an act of bravado organised with deliberate pomp as a kind of moral challenge to the exclusives, or an accident which he dignifies with the title of experience, while consoling himself with the reflection that its accessories have been whisky and flannel trousers, not a dinner-jacket and champagne.

This attitude of mind, of course, assumes a thousand guises, and, even in the same college, may exist in varying degrees of violence, ranging between a devotion to the more decadent forms of French literature and adhesion to the Fabian Society; from timid adventures with opium to a diet of the less prepossessing forms of cereal. Sometimes it takes a metaphysical bias, sometimes a political; sometimes its tendency is mainly æsthetic, or its energies may spend themselves in all these

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directions ; but, whatever the actual set of the current, the greater its power the more extravagant are its manifestations. At its height agnosticism is too cool for it, morality too little logical ; the violence and perversity of its views are only equalled by the blamelessness of its conduct. In theory it is anarchic—in fact most scrupulously governed.

It will be readily imagined that the body of these iconoclasts in a small college will not, in point of size, be a very considerable one. Not every man of intellectual interests will be comprised in it, for not everyone has the intellectual energy which its conditions demand. Some take the easier course of throwing in their lot with the exclusives, and devoting their mental energies, in the time which the pursuit of the conventional routine allows them, to the more pedestrian prosecution of ordinary academic studies. These, from the purely practical point of view, though not from the spiritual, probably get the utmost possible profit from their Cambridge life, gaining a humanity and adaptability which the fiercer spirits are apt to lose, and, in all probability, securing also whatever advantage is to be got in after-life from academic honours. The spiritual power, however, which the few attain, and which is, perhaps, the thing most

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worth attaining, they are likely to miss, and they are apt also to find, when they go out into the world, that they have not succeeded during those years of preparation in attaining the definite scale of valuations with which a more independent attack upon life's problems might have supplied them. For such as these there may be many experiences and many changes to be undergone before any certainty is arrived at, and they may go through life with the feeling that the continual distraction and oppression of its daily details has hindered and must still prevent the spirit, plunged while still callow into the struggle, from its legitimate development.

Others who may possess a sufficient fire of temperament, lack the strength of mind or clarity of judgment to cut themselves adrift of the conventions. To such the University can give but little. They go through their time in continual discontent, half conscious of the unworthiness of the common ideals, yet without the power to discern a *via salutis* in the extravagance of the alternative. Some, in this perplexity, immure themselves in an apparently apathetic isolation, in which none the less discontent works with the process of time a subtle and subconscious revolution. Others less

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fortunate plunge into the least laudable extravagances of their circle and emerge with faculties unimproved, probably even dissipated and impaired, without compass or standard, the struggle still before them and the prospect of a long fight under conditions too little propitious to victory. Some there are, too, who without definitely throwing in their lot with the excluded, stray, as it were, between the two boundaries without sacrificing their ideals to one party or their sanity to the other. But these are rare as perfection. More commonly such a halting between the two camps is the dilemma of a weakling who, with gifts that give him kinship to both parties, has not energy or decision to throw in his lot definitely with either. But none of these characters is common enough to form a class. Nor is the occasional and even rarer hermit, who spends his days in obscurity, known only to one or two friends and emerges for the first time at the Tripos when he astonishes everyone else by taking a brilliant place and discovering himself as a man of individuality and character.

The excluded, like others of the intellectually adventurous, come in for a good deal of unfavourable criticism. The extravagance of their manner is apt to alienate the sympathies even

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of the Dons who ought, one would think, to welcome any sign of intellectual activity. One or two of the younger fellows will probably, it is true, be found powerful members of the circle, their rooms forming year after year a rendezvous for the fiercest of the *sans culotte*, but the arrogance of tone, neglect of college discipline, and inattention to the routine of college work, which are generally characteristic of the extreme members of the fraternity, are apt to tell against the whole. Moreover, the symptoms of the condition are not altogether agreeable. A certain self-consciousness is too often one of them. An extravagance, which may be welcomed if it proceed from natural heat, becomes depressing if one suspects its spontaneity. Again, the excluded tend to stray beyond college boundaries, to join hands with the intellectual sets of Trinity and other large institutions, and the faults which we have noted as inherent in the larger body spread to the newcomers. The dissipation of powers, the segregation, with its resulting inhumanity and freakishness, begin to show themselves, and the influence of Trinity, so excellent where it serves to broaden the ideals of the common mind, becomes less commendable when applied to the intensification of those faults which always threaten the development

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of intellectual minorities. None the less, the excluded play an invaluable part in college life. It is in their circle alone that individuality has a real chance of development, or thought an opportunity of breaking fresh ground. It is they alone who supply the really new life of the University, and the fire, which may perhaps burn too uncontrolledly in some of them, serves to kindle saner and more persistent energies. They supply a spiritual necessity which the conventional can never satisfy, and for that we may well forgive them a capful of eccentricities.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

THE DONS

IN so large and varied a society the question of government is of course one of importance and difficulty. A small college must depend a great deal on its Dons for its position. It is not only that the actual discipline of the institution is in their hands, or that their position enables them to influence its general tone. Besides these advantages, it is undeniable that the character of the management very largely affects the character and class of undergraduates who join any particular college. The reputation of the college teachers of course has considerable effect, especially in those cases where a foundation is famous for a particular branch of learning, as Caius has been for medicine ever since the days of the learned sixteenth-century physician whose name it bears. But this does not go very far. The most insignificant colleges sometimes harbour the greatest reputations: the greatest scholars are often the most incompetent teachers.

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There are other qualities, difficult to define, which have a much greater influence. A capable and worldly tutor, well known at the public schools and in society at large, who has a genial knack of interviewing parents and of impressing them with the fact that he is (rare quality in a Don according to the worldly view) a human being, is of more value than the most eloquent of philosophers. The recent histories of one or two individual foundations offer excellent examples. College A. has risen in the last few years, since its acquisition of a prominent football player as tutor, from 150 to nearly 250 undergraduates. Fifteen years ago the little and impoverished college of B. could not even fill its two tiny courts with undergraduates. Since that date it has put a prominent schoolmaster, whose wife is widely known in society, into the mastership, installed a well-known writer and one of the most capable of the younger scholars from a more famous foundation among its fellows, and harboured a prince as an undergraduate. Now its rooms are full, and it has men in lodgings. College C., whose revenues are also scanty, was half empty at the beginning of the century. But in recent years it, too, has had the good sense to enrol upon its staff two level-headed scholars from another foundation, both excellent business



THE GATE OF VIRTUE, GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE.

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men and closely in touch with great public schools. In a year or two its character changed as if by magic, and it is now one of the most flourishing bodies in the University. The more famous institutions are, of course, less dependent on their staffs, and it is just this independence which gives the lesser colleges their chance. College D., for instance, supports a great number of fellows, distributing its fellowships impartially to men who intend to reside and to those who do not. The system of election is peculiar, being based not upon success in the schools or on the result of any special examination or upon personal fitness, but on an open competition by thesis. "Dissertations," as they are called, are sent in by all candidates, and these are reported on by a special examiner in each case, after which the board of electors, chosen from the college staff, adjudicates on the theses and reports. The dissertations, of course, embrace a great number of widely differing subjects, and the board probably contains some member interested in and competent to form an opinion on each of them, but none competent to deal with all. Moreover, the representatives of different subjects are apt to back their own men, and the result, is that the issue of a fellowship election is always regarded by the candidates as

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something of a lottery, and the system adopted often loses the college a good man. Some take their fellowship, and use the proceeds during the eight years of its duration to support them through the early days of a career at the bar, or to supplement the exiguous salary of a young Civil servant; some receive a good offer from another foundation, and prefer not to run the risk of an election at their own. The mother college loses, and another gains. The policy is a generous one, and the institution which adopts it can probably afford its risks. It has, moreover, an element of sport about it, resulting, as it sometimes does, in the election of the most unlikely people, who, after comparative failure in the schools and a career of eccentricity or obscurity, have the enterprise to send in a dissertation on some original theme (perhaps one entirely outside the ordinary scope of academic study), take the board, as it were, by storm, and secure for themselves a position in which they can give their talents full play, instead of being forced into professions for which an eccentricity of character or a preoccupation with some particular hobby would have rendered them wholly unsuitable.

In college combination rooms eccentricity is indeed apt to escape remark. The tradition of

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the old system, according to which marriage entailed the loss of a fellowship, still lingers, though the penalty has been abolished everywhere for more than a generation. None the less, Dons tend to remain bachelors, and undoubtedly, from many points of view, celibacy is an advantage. It is essential that the holder of any important office, such as that of Tutor or Dean, should be in college as much as possible. Some foundations insist on their chief officials dining and sleeping in at least five nights a week. Moreover, a man cannot hope for much intimacy with those under his care if he is never in college after seven o'clock. The old theory, when colleges were really guilds of learning, was that the undergraduates should actually share their rooms with fellows, and the close and continuous comradeship of both was regarded as the most effective method of education. The increase in the numbers of those *in statu pupillari* has long since made any such organisation impossible, and the system of fixed examinations, tutors and lectures, with its attendant advantages and disadvantages, has gradually come into being. With the consequent separation of the Dons from the undergraduates, the insuperable objection to married fellows disappeared, and one has only

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to read the diverting pages of Mr. Gunning, Esquire Bedell between 1790 and 1850, to realise that the gain in the morality and general normality of the fellows has been inestimable. None the less, Cambridge, especially in the more important foundations, still keeps a considerable number of bachelor fellows, the older of whom retain, in some instances, a flavour of the eccentricity of the past. A contributing cause is the survival of not a few of those actually elected under the old system—elected, that is to say, for life, on the condition of celibacy. A few of these linger on in spacious rooms, the furniture of which has not been renewed, or even moved, for perhaps half a century, but has stood there, declining gradually like themselves into an old age which seems only an imperceptible fading of their substance. It is perhaps years since they did any regular work on the college staff, but one still sees them trotting into Hall, or to play croquet or bowls in the college garden. Innumerable stories grow to them like molluscs, clinging to every crease of their oddly cut garments, every wisp of the beards and whiskers so quaintly disposed about their withered yet strangely childish features. To the ever changing generations that flow by them it

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seems impossible to think that they have ever been young, impossible to believe that they can ever grow older, and, when at last they fade away in earnest, the college wakes to a vacuity, as though an unseen hand had shattered, in the night, some ancient pinnacle whose friendly shadow had for centuries crept from dawn to sundown round the expectant court.

Indeed, no stone of our most ancient walls has survived a greater revolution than that which these shadows of an earlier day have witnessed. The old race of Dons, who rode to hounds, coursed rabbits on their college lawns, and sat from dusk to dawn pushing the bottle round their shining tables, has passed irretrievably away. Fellowships are given now for short periods and subject to renewal only if the holder has shown himself likely to be of service to the college. The multiplicity of examinations requires a high standard of teaching and a considerable application in the teachers. There are but few of the fellows who ever go into the combination room after dinner, and even there cigars soon make a sacrilegious appearance, and after a round or two of the decanters members begin to tail off to their wives and families, to play a rubber of bridge, or grapple with arrears of work. Even

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combination-room quarrels are no longer on the grand scale, as when, under the famous Dr. Bentley, Trinity was rent by a schism which lasted forty years, and begat pamphlets and scurrilities enough to fill a library. College life is a sober business nowadays, and one should be thankful that the lingering influence of the old tradition and the masculinity, which is still the dominating feature of Cambridge society, ensure the survival of a few agreeable eccentricities. The Don escapes the narrowness and self-sufficiency which are the schoolmaster's especial danger. The circumstances of academic study and the intercourse with "men" who are, at least in their own estimation, his equals, compel him to broader views. But the devotion to abstract studies, undisturbed by the constraining influences of ordinary social life, still provoke here and there the strangest antics of mind.

The days of one are absorbed in the study of Greek lyric measures. He lives and thinks in Greek. It is told of such a one that on falling seriously ill and realising the strange world to which the best years of his soul had been devoted, he took to his bed and sent his "gyp" to borrow the complete works of Shakespeare, feeling that it would be criminal to die ignorant

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of Hamlet, Lear, and Macbeth—that only thus could he make his peace with modernity. The life of such an enthusiast loses all consideration of time and place. His rooms are covered ankle-deep in papers, pamphlets, letters, chapel lists, circulars, proof-sheets, notes for his colossal work on the fragments of Bacchylides, which has been announced in the Press nineteen times during the past ten years, and is likely to remain another ten “in preparation.” The cold beef and pint of beer brought for dinner are eaten at midnight or breakfast-time next morning or in any other suitable intermittence of inspiration, and when they are finished he will probably go to bed and stay there till the hour of the night or day at which he happens to wake. If he is put down to lecture it is ten to one that he forgets or mistakes the hour. If an unwary freshman sends him in a copy of verses for correction, it passes inevitably to the deposit on the floor, and ceases from that moment to have an independent existence. It is an act of hardihood for any but an intimate to attempt to call on him. He starts up with blank eyes to which intelligence slowly climbs from the abyss of thought. Consciousness once secure on her throne, he asks, in the anguished tone of Don Juan confronting the statue, “What

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do you want?" You explain as discreetly as you can that you have come to call on him. For a moment he seems genuinely pleased, and with a childlike courtesy fetches two straight-backed chairs which he plants in a clear space of floor exactly under the electric light. You sit down facing one another at eighteen inches, like cats on a wall. Blankness overwhelms him again. You realise the hopelessness of the struggle, and make an inglorious retreat.

Yet when the cloud lifts no man can be more charming. He enjoys a day with the hounds, or a wild innings at a long vacation cricket-match as much as any freshman. He travels, observes and can remember what he sees. He has an astonishing acquaintance with the humorous literature of all countries, including *Fliegende Blätter* and the *Sporting Times*, to both of which he has long been a regular subscriber. His knowledge of the comedians of the variety stage is extensive and discriminating. And above all, for those who have the privilege of his friendship, he is a teacher whose every word is an inspiration—to other teachers as an archangel to a temperance lecturer. Yet his actual lectures are beyond despair. He will hurry into the room ten minutes late, open

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his Æschylus apologetically at the knottiest of choruses, which he will start reading rather rapidly in the original Greek, saying nervously from time to time: "Of course you all know what that means," or, "All plain enough, I think." Reaching the end of the chorus he beams round on a score or so of blank faces. But we are too far gone to ask questions—some of us are playing noughts and crosses, some drawing scurrilous pictures for circulation among the benches, some have novels under the desk, some are asleep, some complacently demolishing arrears of correspondence. "And then" we hear him say, evidently pleased with the result of his scrutiny: "Er—you see—er——" A messenger comes in and he says: "Ah—um——" and off we go again into a sea of Greek, upon the ebb of which he sails in great relief back to his rooms and his Bacchylides. Another hermit is engaged in the pursuit of the higher mathematics. He never teaches—nor, as far as the undergraduates are concerned, does he ever speak. Indeed, I doubt if any of us even fully realise his existence. Now and then we become dimly aware of a rather tall, spare man with a colourless face, in colourless clothes, with a soft black hat on the back of his head and an armful of papers, flitting silently

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round a corner of the court, but the impression is too fleeting to provoke inquiry. Indeed, no one knows how he really spends his time. No work from his pen has ever reached the stage of publication, though it is rumoured that his ambition is to concentrate the fruit of his vast knowledge and long years of study on a single sheet of cardboard, which is to be a summary of (mathematical) wisdom. Unfortunately, each step in his continual advance makes an amendment necessary. So that it seems extremely doubtful whether even this work will ever reach completion. The opinion among us lesser lights is that, even if it does, no one else will be able to understand it, so we at least contrive to wait in patience for its conclusion.

It is perhaps shyness, exaggerated a hundred-fold by years of isolation, which most contributes to this species of eccentricity. As the shrinking from human society withdraws the mind more and more from common preoccupations, the master passion seizes the deserted outposts, and in the process of time the citadel is cut off altogether. Indeed, it is strange how almost universal this disease of shyness is in combination-room society. There is hardly one who does not seem to feel himself always confronted by hostile elements, perpetually surrounded

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and perpetually vigilant, able to relax guard only on rare occasions in the company of one or two congenial and intimate friends. Some are saved from the extremity of isolation by the necessities of a college office which brings them continually into contact with other interests and other points of view. These remain in the world, though one may conjecture that the condition affords them but little satisfaction. Occasionally, however, one comes across a character whose eccentricity seems in no way attributable to any disinclination for human society. It is impossible to say of such a one whether it is Cambridge that has bred his peculiarities, or whether it is their existence that has driven him to Cambridge. If the latter be the case, she has, one may be sure, at least increased them. A character of this sort is often extremely fond of society—the masculine society of the University, that is—and shows an extraordinary adaptability and power of handling it. In spite of decided oddities of dress and appearance, he seems able to enlist the interest and sympathy of the most diverse characters. His hospitality is lavish, and his interest in the arts of the table attains an almost religious intensity. His conferences with the college cook are pontifical in their gravity, and each succeeding year

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suspends a votive fold beneath his chin. He is immersed in every kind of college business, and despatches all with the greatest zest and punctuality. He may even become the centre of political intrigue, and this, too, he conducts with the greatest perspicacity and success, though the principles which animate him are hardly as modern as his practice. For he is a staunch and convinced Jacobite, and nightly drinks the King over the water with due solemnity. In matters religious he moves in the most rarefied atmosphere of High Churchmanship. He can endure no music later than Palestrina, for whom he always professes a profound and truly orthodox esteem. His spare hours are devoted to the elucidation of the Greek novelists, of whom he is preparing a comprehensive edition, with translation, introduction, bibliography, and notes critical, philological, and sociological, and a battery of cross references huge enough to affright even the learned. In addition he is a complete Russian scholar, and has spent much time at St. Petersburg, instructing himself in the dogmas and practices of the Greek Church and engaging the aristocracy at games of hazard in which he was invariably successful, for he plays with a combination of nerve and recklessness which it is almost impossible to withstand.

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He still maintains a profound and intricate correspondence with patriarchs, and encyclopædias in distress upon a point of orthodoxy never apply to him in vain.

There are many colleges whose life in reality centres round some figure of this kind. In one it is a passionate philologist, universal in knowledge, omnivorous in interest; a fluent and incessant talker, who seems to aggregate friends like a snowball, so that his rooms are seldom empty after Hall, and his Thursday evenings draw the whole University and the strangers that are within its gates. A couple of soldiers, with bronzed faces and bristling moustaches, newly home from the Soudan, stare rather strangely from the corner of the fire-place; three stately Orientals, in frock coats and turbans (probably old correspondents of their host's), make a group under the electric light; a long-haired bachelor, with a turn-down collar, is crashing on the piano. Undergraduates drift in and out, smoking cigarettes; poets, journalists, barristers, parsons, a parent or two, a German professor on a visit of inquiry, and a young Don from Oxford very much alive to impressions, make a ring about the syphons and decanters under the mullioned window of the large room, while the host hurries from group

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to group through the clouds of tobacco-smoke discussing the latest novel, or the last outrage of the Opposition, chuckling over a titbit of University scandal, analysing the slow ball of a freshman from Lancing, or confuting a heretic on a point of scholarship. In another college the dark third-floor rooms of a world-famous Orientalist are the scene of a weekly *Salon*. Here, the presiding genius has far more of the scholar's traditional reserve. Indeed, to a stranger, his principal interests seem to be acrostics, detective stories, and the Church music of William Byrd. His industry in the pursuit of the first two subjects is almost passionate in its intensity, and yet one is conscious, even when his application is at its fiercest, that he regards the whole thing as a joke—that there is something ironical in his zeal. He is essentially a grave man, yet there is a background of irony to his very gravity. He seems to see something gravely humorous even in that. He is a man of deep reserves. His dark, heavy, bearded face, set squarely above the short stolid body behind gold-rimmed spectacles, has the unvarying quality of a mask, lit only by the deep-set gleam of large grey eyes. He moves with a step grave, leisured and oddly silent. One puzzles continually as to the real content

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of his mind. He takes a sober and courteous interest in everything that is said, but the interest is a little too invariable. Its evenness seems to reduce everything to the same level of unimportance, and leaves his own standards in perpetual obscurity. His *Salon* reflects his character with curious accuracy. It does not attract so many visitors from the outside world as that we have just left, though few old members of the college revisit it without passing an evening with him. Undergraduates come freely and with enjoyment, though they talk very little. Nor does he himself maintain any current of conversation. He has no fear of silences and speaks low and intermittently, turning from one to another and presenting to each, in turn, the impenetrable transparency of his large round glasses. Small groups gather and talk in low voices on sofas and in corners. Now and then he throws back his head and laughs loudly with a barking sound and motion at some quip or story, and sometimes drops a dry witticism himself as he pads across to the mantelpiece to fill his vast curving pipe or blinks at you over a large whisky and soda. One wonders what it is that holds his large society so closely. One cannot believe that his rapt scholarly soul really finds pleasure in the conversation of three-quarters of

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the miscellaneous assemblage which seems always hovering on the verge of his intimacy. Yet he never lets any of them see that their every word and action is not of the first importance to him, and one feels, in talking to or watching him, that, whatever the real quality of his ideals and beliefs, there is in his nature a spring of sympathy, deep, unclouded and un-failing, a spring at which all may seek refreshment, and that no man can be long in his company without realising its presence. He that has such a gift can draw all men to him, however small their need.

It is impossible to generalise a type of the Don, and it would be tedious and confusing to inundate the reader with a succession of individual characters. Dons are, after all, human beings, and therefore, like the rest of humanity, subject to an almost infinite variation of personality. There are many commonplace Dons—many, that is, who seem to approach very nearly to what we are pleased to consider the normal standard of mankind. The Don of this type takes his profession seriously (like all Englishmen) and works at it industriously. He grinds up uninspiring lectures on Thucydides, spends conscientious hours correcting laboured versions into Greek and Latin, goes to chapel

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twice on Sunday, and three or four times in the week—probably more by way of example than through any fervour of conviction. He runs with the College Boat as long as his figure permits him, and entertains undergraduates to breakfast and coffee with decorous regularity. His vacation he probably spends at a well-known golf resort, where his industry is rewarded by a steady reduction of his handicap and the occasional conquest of a florid silver vase or bald-faced travelling clock.

Then one may perhaps distinguish further types in the Don Sentimental and the Don Rebellious. The former belongs to a class perhaps more familiar at the public schools. He lectures ecstatically (and it is to be feared for the most part unprofitably) on the Greek anthology or the erotic poets of Rome, is generally to be found in his college chapel at the afternoon service, where he handles the anthem book with the relish of a connoisseur, and has been known to recite sonnets to depressed undergraduates after dinner. Since his creed involves the conscientious pursuit of culture, a chaste enthusiasm may lure him out in vacation time on a Lunn's tour to Italy or Greece, or for three weeks with a bicycle among the cathedrals of Normandy. He probably marries a Cambridge

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lady before his fellowship has run through its first period, and retires to live in a snug villa on the Madingley Road, from whence, however, he finds leisure to pursue his innocent and, on the whole, beneficial practices.

The Don Rebellious, on the other hand, is a sterner creature. We have already seen him as a rallier of the excluded, and to some extent he shares their characteristics. He is an ardent patron of small essay and debating clubs, dresses dingily, though sometimes with a certain distinction in his dinginess, and is generally irregular in his habits, so that the belated undergraduate looks confidently for a light in his window at any hour of the night, and early callers are sure to find his untouched breakfast frigidly disposed upon his table. Chapel, of course, he never visits. Indeed, he can hardly pass it without a snort of irritation. His rooms, though untidy, are comfortable, lined with books of every kind ancient and modern, with many shelves of small buckram-bound volumes of French poetry and fiction. The eye detects also a row of more solid volumes on sociological subjects and several others of philosophy and politics and perhaps more technical branches of science. For decoration he inclines to photographs of pictures and statues (relics of foreign



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galleries he has visited), often unframed and fixed with pins upon the wall, and enlivened by an occasional and more daring reproduction of the particular form of modern extravagance in which his soul finds nourishment. In the same way, though his hours are erratic, and his meals usually bolted before a book propped upon the water-bottle, he is capable of an imaginative appreciation of his victuals, and his Sunday lunch parties—sole in a cheese sauce, *filets piqués*, and savoury, with a bottle of Steinberger Kabinet, exquisitely mature—contrast favourably with the cold and ponderous orgies of common Cambridge hospitality. As for recreation, he takes it sparingly, though he is fond of a walking tour in the autumn, and is occasionally known to ride. He has, probably, more intimates among the undergraduates than any other class of Don, and is often a first-rate teacher, though constitutionally impatient of the conventional types with whom he has to deal. Now and then, however, one gets a fellow of this class who is able to rise above personal inclinations, and to put his mind wholly into tutorial work. Such a one is the backbone of his college. He treats his work as a business, and pursues it without being diverted or blinded by sentiment. No one ever

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comes for his advice in vain or finds it unprofitable. Though, in private life, his creed is as strict and as anticonventional as that of any member of his order, his tolerance, where business is concerned, appears to be universal, and, in losing him, his college loses half its stimulus and half its sanity.

But neither he nor any other of our teachers can be said to play a very positive part in our lives. They are there, and we know that we can go to them if we want to. The extent to which they are frequented is the test of their capacity. And their policy is a wise one. Dons cannot really move among us on terms of equality. Their interests are not ours, and any attempt at real comradeship is apt to proceed either from an immaturity of mind which renders the possessor unfit for any position of responsibility or from a calculated insincerity which is at once suspected of jesuitical objects. A Don without a spice of humanity is useless, but one who forces his humanity upon us forfeits its advantages. Nor is it to be supposed that this kind of negative influence must of necessity be a weak one. Where the ideals and attainments of a college are low the fault is in general not that the Dons do too little, but that they are too little. Breadth of mind,

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sympathy, common-sense, and a sane idealism will always have their effect, and Cambridge is not often without many figures to whom she can turn for the benefit of these inestimable qualities.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

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NEXT in importance to those who govern us are those by whom we are served. Indeed, our connection with the latter is, in many respects, more intimate, the part they play in our lives more positive and continual.

The system of service at Cambridge is elaborate and peculiar, and deserves a more or less detailed description. One of the principal features of a Cambridge college is its food-supply, with the three branches of kitchen, buttery and cellar, originally designed, no doubt, to make the institution self-supporting. The last of these departments has no longer its old importance. We no longer drink and no longer brew, but we still procure an annual supply of "audit" ale every autumn, which, when first circulated in Hall on audit night, never fails to produce a marked and stimulating effect upon those unaccustomed to its potency. We still retain, too, some of the fine and

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curious vintages bequeathed to us by the past, such as the pale sherry of Trinity, and the Bucellus of Magdalene; but every year less is consumed and, in consequence, less laid down for future consumption. The kitchen and buttery, however, tend to increase in importance as the cellar diminishes. The distinctive province of the latter is "Commons," the supply of beer, bread, tea, coffee, sugar, milk, and butter, the simpler forms of human nourishment, but, in many colleges, the sphere of the buttery has, with the increase in the luxury of our own living, begun to extend to the provision of tobacco, sweets and other luxuries, which fall more naturally within the scope of the ordinary tradesman.

"Hall" is the characteristic and most ancient field of the kitchen's enterprise, and Hall is an institution of importance and dignity. Here undergraduates are compelled to attend the common dinner on a fixed number of nights every week (generally five), and in some colleges lunch is provided—a convenience of which a certain number take advantage. In addition to this, the kitchen must supply all those who wish to have meals in their own rooms, for they may not have cooked food brought in from outside, while even those who live in lodgings

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very often get their food from within ; though, in this respect, the recent improvements at the Pitt Club have probably made a difference. However, the college kitchen has this advantage over clubs and restaurants : it does not require payment on the nail, though it reserves power to withhold supplies should a customer's bill attain menacing proportions. When this happens, the unfortunate must either pay or live precariously on the hospitality of his friends, although, I believe, in some cases, where the defaulter lives in lodgings, another college has been known to turn blackleg and take the risk.

The position of the college cook is, therefore, one of importance. He must rule a numerous band of waiters and scullions. There are, besides, a host of "kitchen touts," who may be seen daily at meal-times hurrying about the court in greasy caps and aprons, with high-piled, baize-covered trays upon their heads, and later retrieving the débris at their leisure in rumbling trollies, on one of which the college cat will infallibly be seated, cleaning its whiskers with majestic satisfaction. The mere control of the stores, too, requires no little business capacity and personal integrity, and an incompetent or dishonest cook can cause his college very serious



HARRY MORLEY.

MAGDALENE HALL.

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loss, as occasional scandals have too clearly shewn. There is every reason, therefore, for a college to be careful about its cook, and many have chefs of real distinction. For the members of the high table (like all people who get something for nothing) are exceedingly particular, and the undergraduate practice of giving dinner-parties in college (much more prevalent than at Oxford, where club life plays a larger part) gives scope for the artistic imagination, many of these entertainments being thought out as carefully, and as seriously (if not as learnedly) criticised, as a city banquet. In May week the resources of the kitchen are often unbearably taxed, and one has known anxious parties of shy hosts, unpractised maidens, and irritable dowagers, kept waiting an hour or more for a cold and fragmentary meal. A good cook, however, or, rather, a good caterer, for he is more caterer than cook, can avoid these calamities, and a bad one is not often tolerated by the dilettanti of the high table, although traitors have been known to conceal by their sedulous attention to the fellows dinner long years of inattention to the needs of those below the dais and their own too infrequent lapses into sobriety. Indeed, Undergraduate Hall is apt to be rather a travesty of a meal, as may be judged from the fact that,

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though usually dignified with a French menu, it is consumed, as a rule, in something under five-and-twenty minutes. At the hour appointed the undergraduates file in in their gowns and seat themselves at the long tables that run up and down at right angles to the dais. A minute or two later, the Dons, a straggling procession in their long masters' gowns, clasping their caps in front of them, ramble in and up to the high table. We rise as they enter with a great rasping of benches, and remain standing while a Latin grace is said. In a moment all is noise and confusion. Armies of waiters rush in bearing piles of plates, which they slap down before us with a rush and a clatter ; there is a continuous rattle of four hundred knives and forks, a clinking of two hundred glasses, and the united clamour of two hundred voices shouting through the din. In the early stages of this hubbub the bachelors, who dine at a separate table, dribble in, one by one, and begin a feast slightly more leisured and dignified than our own, for their table lies at the side out of the worst of the clamour, and they do not rise with the rest of us but sit on till all have finished, so that they do not feel themselves, as we do, oppressed by the continual necessity of beating the clock. For the rest of us the encounter is a brisk one, and we, as well

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as the waiters, who have all run themselves to a standstill, are relieved when the signal is given for the final grace and we stream out into the cool and quiet of the court, loiter there a few minutes in knots and couples, and drift off again gradually by ones and twos, with backward shouts and interchange of laughter, to coffee in our friends' rooms.

Another institution which requires a staff to support it is the College Chapel. Here, the porters attend to mark us in as we file in and take our places. On week-days their task is a light one, for most of us take advantage of the rule which allows us to demonstrate our morning punctuality by signing our names in a book at the Porter's Lodge at eight o'clock, the hour at which early chapel begins, a course which offers several advantages: it takes a shorter time than the service for which it acts as a substitute, and, moreover, one does not need to dress for it, but can come flying across the grass of the front court, as the clock is striking, in pumps, pyjamas, and a great-coat, and then go back to bed and to sleep with a sense of duty done, and the comfortable feeling that one is still not really hopelessly awakened.*

* A short time ago the undergraduates at one of the most important colleges "struck" against this system. The

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Some of the more impressive of the “gyps” also assist at chapel, where, clad in strange gowns and grasping “holy pokers” in their hands, they pilot visitors to their seats and act as Mercuries to the chief officials of the college, while the superintendence of the whole function is in the hands of a still more majestic being who has worn the gown and wielded the poker for a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, while his head has yearly grown more shiny, his face yearly plumper and more rubicund, his fringe of whiskers whiter and more bristly, his figure more and more ample in the conscious dignity of his daily service.

In many colleges the choir is an important and valuable part of the establishment, though one which cannot be maintained without considerable expense. To secure a supply of good sopranos and altos, a school must be kept where singers receive a free education. Some of these schools are large and admirably managed, but the majority of their members do not concern us, for we see nothing of them unless we chance to engage in one of the annual matches at

authorities recognised the general demand, and the system was abolished—a striking instance of the lenience of Cambridge discipline to which I have already referred.



KING'S CHAPEL AND CLARE CHAPEL.

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football or cricket, which the college organises against the school, matches which the boys take in desperate earnest, and in which many a sedate and portly Don, the limit of whose daily energies does not exceed twelve miles upon a carefully-tended bicycle, makes it a point of honour to take part. And, indeed, the spectacle of the tiny champions darting hither and thither in desperate activity, flinging themselves against the long and distracted legs of their sober and spectacled antagonists, running round them, running through them, heroically immolating themselves before their slow and ponderous advances, is one which no one that has once enjoyed it would willingly forego. For the rest we see little of the choir outside chapel, unless we meet the train of them trotting two and two, in top hats and black cloth gowns, across the backs to their daily duty; and inside we know them chiefly as voices whose wavering and silver charm contrasts, almost pathetically, with the florid finish of the professional tenors and basses in the rows behind them. With their names and personalities we do not concern ourselves, though their faces, some conventionally cherubic, some peering spectacled and quaintly aged from the encircling white of Eton collars and clean surplices, display a

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variety which the less cultured of us find sadly wanting in their long chants and interminable anthems. Yet there is no better choral singing (on a small scale) and no more impressive service than is to be found in some of our college chapels, and the greatest credit is due to the generous expenditure of money and labour which makes such results possible. A great deal is done by the avoidance of the ordinary professional singer. Two or three, of course, there must be, but the bulk of the adult part of the choir is often supplied by choral scholars, who rank as ordinary scholars of the college, and receive the same benefits on condition of singing in the choir. In this way it is possible to secure a continual supply of good musicians, with fresh voices and a general education, which puts them considerably above the ordinary tenors and basses of a church choir. Occasionally, too, some exceptionally trustworthy singer is given an office in the college, which he can hold in conjunction with his choral duties, and thus the organist and choir-master are certain of having one person upon whom they can rely to carry on their traditions, whatever changes and upheavals may take place in the general body of the choir.

In another department of college service

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continuity is more easily secured. The college porter is remarkable for his endurance and longevity. And yet one would imagine the porter's life to be a rather exhausting one. His duties begin with the opening of the gates at 6.30 in the morning, and continue (subject to relief obtained by working in shifts) until the gates finally close at midnight. Even then the head-porter, often a venerable old gentleman of seventy years or more, is liable to be rung up by stray roysterers at any time up till one o'clock. Some colleges have a sliding-scale of fines for entering after 10.30 p.m. Others rely upon the common punishment of "gating" —*i.e.*, confining the delinquent to college (or his lodgings, for the landlady plays the part of porter to those who live out) after a certain hour. The porters, therefore, must know everyone by sight, and they must admit no one but residents in college after 10 p.m. Further, they must know where everyone lives, and must watch the errand boys and others who go in and out all day long, and act in general as the informal police force of the college. The delivery of letters, parcels, and luggage also falls within their sphere, as well as a thousand and one smaller miscellaneous duties which it would be tiresome to enumerate.

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So much for what one may call the general staff of the college. Our personal comforts are in other hands. And here we come upon one of the most famous and peculiar of all Cambridge institutions—the “bed-maker.” At Oxford the whole care of college rooms and their inhabitants is entrusted (unnatural conjunction) to men, called “scouts.” Cambridge, with greater confidence in the morality of her children, allows them to be tended by women. There is, however, a legend amongst undergraduates that the Statutes, with a prudence more subtle than that of the sister society, have added the proviso that our servants should be *anus vultu horribiles*.

Each bed-maker has several sets of rooms on the same staircase, or sometimes on adjoining staircases, to attend to. For the owners of these rooms she has to do all the requisite housemaid’s work, to lay the table for meals, and wash up, and, in the case of a man who has no other servant, to perform as many of a valet’s duties as he can persuade her to undertake. Each is assisted in these functions by a “help,” generally her niece or daughter, though in some cases a son is known to undertake this rather menial office. It will be seen that the “bedder” belongs by

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force of circumstance to the genus "char," but generations of exclusively masculine control (or want of it), liberal wages, and unlimited pickings have produced a new species, the extreme examples of which possess, it must be admitted, many of the eccentricities commonly attributed to the bed-maker of fiction. A lady of this class may be recognised at a glance. The red face, the nodding and battered bonnet, the ragged black shawl folded across her chest, the greasy black bag in which she carries away her spoils, the general suggestion of velvet, beads, and bottle-necks, betray her instantly. Untidiness leaks from every inch of her; every gesture betrays incompetence. Her garrulity is a by-word, and any suggestion of additional work is apt to provoke it to an almost painful intensity. Her conversation is, in form, generally anecdotal, and is apt to be of that kind of which, when it is once ended, no vestige remains in the memory of the hearer. As a corollary it may be added that no trace of what the other party to the conversation has said remains in hers. This peculiarity of the race has provoked many strange revenges, but none, perhaps, more strange than that conceived by a cynical and rather callous fast bowler, now administering one of the remotest provinces of

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our Empire with conspicuous success. This unfortunate was served by a bed-maker of the least efficient variety and her son, who had obviously adopted the profession in doubt as to his capacity to succeed in any other. One Sunday the fast bowler had with unwonted geniality invited two friends to lunch. On the preceding day he gave the "help" the order for the meal, which promised to be of a substantial character, for he was a man of hearty appetite. At 1.30 on the day of invitation his friends arrived, but no lunch, and the party was compelled to stay their hunger on sardines and raspberry jam. The "help" was absent (Sunday afternoon being a free time) and the kitchen closed, so no explanation was forthcoming until about 6.30 p.m., when a kitchen tout staggered upstairs and, deaf to the fast bowler's protests (he was indeed really deaf by infirmity), proceeded to deposit on the table mayonnaise of salmon for three, a cold and dismembered fowl, six cold cutlets and salad, and a large cherry tart. Having performed this office, the tout retired touching his hat, conscious of duty done, and oblivious of the host's discomposure, which his great age and lifelong addiction to the bottle prevented him from observing. A light dawned on the fast bowler. His "help" had mistaken the hour.

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He himself was supping out, but his dark soul conceived a use to which, as he thought, the belated viands could most fittingly be put. He went to the stairhead and shouted down the stone flights for the "help," who, presaging disaster, was at his door ere the last grim reverberation had wholly died away. A short catechism confirmed the truth of the surmise, and then a hideous choice was offered to the defaulter—either to pay for the supper or consume it there and then. The wretched man, whose circumstances made the former course impracticable, was fain to adopt the latter. It was nine o'clock before his gruesome task was finished. A concession was made in regard to bones and the stones of the cherries, but beyond these not a shred remained when the unhappy creature staggered from the room, leaving the débris of the meal behind him to be cleared away by his weeping parent on the following day; and his inhuman master, who had willingly foregone his supper to superintend the lamentable banquet, finished the sardines and raspberry jam, smoked a pipe with more than common enjoyment, and went to bed in a state nearer to satisfaction than he is believed ever to have attained before or since.

But the race of "bedders" has suffered

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enough at the hands of the critic. For the most part they are hardworking, clean, tidy, and competent old ladies, often reasonably reticent, sometimes even comely. The writer had the advantage of being tended by one who possessed all these virtues, and, in gratitude to her, let us leave the vices of the tribe without further analysis.

Those who require more attention than a "bedder" can give them, supplement her services with those of a man-servant, or "gyp," reducing her wages in proportion. The same "gyp" serves many masters, Dons and undergraduates alike, and an old servant acquires, in this way, no little philosophy and knowledge of mankind. It says much for their discretion as a class that they manage, as a rule, to do their duty to both rulers and subjects with perfect loyalty to each.

The functions of a "gyp" are very like those of a valet, and the "gyp" has, perhaps, some of the characteristics of the valet of romance. His most distinctive quality is an unabating cheerfulness. He may have every intention of neglecting your orders, but he always receives them with the same alacrity. Nothing annoys, nothing surprises him. He has been through it all so often before. He

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has seen so many men scramble through their two years in college, cutting lectures, failing to "sign in," getting "hauled" (summoned before the Dean), and "gated." He has valeted blues and scholars, rich and poor, the sober and the gay. He will set your table with an egg-cup and half a Dutch cheese as respectfully as with all the paraphernalia of a nine-course dinner. Day after day he goes through the same routine of getting you out of bed, with the same persevering cheerfulness. He begins at 7.30, not that he has any hope that you will get up then in order to sign-in fully dressed, but by way of a preliminary skirmish. The attack is accepted by both parties as a purely conventional opening, and you go to sleep again. In ten minutes he is back. This time his manner is a little more urgent; he reminds you that you have a coach at nine o'clock, and that Mr. Brown is coming to breakfast at 8.15. This attack is designed to rouse your faculties a little in order that at the next move they may be more or less pervious to reason. In five minutes he is back again. Now he begins to recall past iniquities and hint at imminent perils. From this point until eight o'clock assaults follow each other thick and fast. Each is opened by an excellent simulation

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of distressed surprise. It is plain that you are undermining his confidence in human nature, and ill repaying his peculiar interest in yourself. He has seen Mr. Brown strolling, fully dressed, about the court (this is a false move, for you know your friend too well). He hints at a growing depression among the powers in regard to your future. He provokes you to argument in the hope that the effort may awaken you. It does, and at 7.59 he is rewarded by the vision of the skirts of your *aquascutum* whisking round the corner on the way to the Porter's Lodge. This done, he retires with a clear conscience to call Mr. Brown, who has already signed-in thrice this week, and has only a ten o'clock lecture to consider. If you have the misfortune to be secretary of any of the college teams or debating societies, a "gyp" is practically essential for the delivery of notes, and you can hardly do without one if you aspire to any serious entertaining; for he will borrow you unlimited glass, china, plate, and knives, hire and superintend your waiters, keep an eye open for outside alarms if the proceedings grow at all noisy, and, on the slightest hint of trouble, warn you with a confidential whisper. Next morning he will let you down gently in the matter of getting up, unless the

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need for your presence at Sunday chapel be, owing to past delinquencies, unusually urgent; and if an excess of hilarity at your entertainment should lead to a summons from the Junior Dean (whose "gyp" he also is), he will bring you the "haul card" with a manner delicately adjusted to show at once his sympathy as a part-sharer in the offence, his realisation of its trifling character, his determination not to point out that he had warned you all along of the inevitable consequence of your recklessness, and his resigned recognition of the necessity that even in your case discipline should, for the sake of general order, be invariably maintained.

There are, of course, many types of "gyp." There is the old "gyp" who has been in college forty years, and likes nothing better than a halting and deprecatory reminiscence, the end of which he always smothers in a discreet cough. He is too old, or perhaps simply too philosophical, to worry about the ordinary routine of service; but when an emergency comes, he rises to it with the astuteness of an old campaigner. No one can deal so delicately with a master's creditors as he. So discreetly is it done that the beleaguered one is hardly conscious of the campaign. Half a sentence, a deprecatory laugh, a nervous cough, and a skilful diversion

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of the channel of conversation represent all the information received inside the fortress of some great engagement in which the foe has been gloriously outwitted. No one can arrange for an entertainment as he can. If your dinner party attains excessive dimensions, he will not shrink from organising it in the rooms of a well-known fellow who happens to be in Italy, for, as he explains to you demurely, "Mr. Jones has so much glass and silver that it will be unnecessary for us to borrow any more." Then there is the middle-aged and stately "gyp," slow of tread and florid of manner, who prides himself (and justly so) on the air with which he throws open your shutters in the morning and pronounces on the state of the weather, an act which he performs with the solemnity of one secure in the confidence of his Creator. Then there is the young and bustling "gyp" who aims less at dignity than at a general atmosphere of efficiency. His manner is delicately poised between familiarity and deference. He works hard and systematically, and, as far as actual results go, is probably superior to his more majestic colleagues. He captains the college servants' team which plays against us at cricket in the long vacation, and is always ready to take you a luncheon-basket to Newmarket or

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Cottenham, or to carry your gun if you get a day's shooting—in fact, he professes omniscience and omnipotence as incidents of his general efficiency; and if he does not invariably justify his pretensions, one need not be too hard on the deficiencies. On his own mind they scarcely make even a transitory impression.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

CAMBRIDGE CHARACTERS

CAMBRIDGE probably produces as many eccentricities to the square mile as any other part of His Majesty's Dominions. One could fill a volume with the catalogue of them, and an exceedingly entertaining and instructive volume it might be. One might begin with a sketch of the scholar of Trinity who devoted his considerable talents to discovering whether the legend that a divided worm grows into two distinct bodies is a true one. To this end he had a box full of earth placed outside his windows, and in it stored the halves of worms, which he distinguished by the names of Greek philosophers, and used to fish out with an old pair of scissors and exhibit with much pride and learned disquisition to chance visitors. One might include a scholar of a lesser foundation who used to take 300 Barnwell children yearly to Yarmouth for ten days, keep them in a disused hulk on the beach, and nourish them

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with bloaters bought wholesale by the thousand ; or a commoner, who received a revelation on the Ely road and entered into partnership with an itinerant vendor of salt fish for the purpose of establishing the Unity of the Christian Churches. Then there was another scholar, also (like so many young men of emotional temperament) suffering under a short spell of religious excitement, who became interested in spiritualism, and devoted an evening to table-rapping. Unfortunately, the first spirit who got into communication with him was that of Mrs. Jordan, or some other frail lady of the eighteenth-century stage, whose conversation proved so disquieting to him that he fled distracted into the court, and had to be removed to a place of rest for the remainder of the term. Or there was the candidate for a fellowship, who, believing himself to be descended from the Scottish Kings, was persuaded by a malicious friend to put a parchment copy of his pedigree, picked out in red ink, into the master's letter-box with his dissertation. Or, again, one might hazard a disquisition on the Cambridge practical jokers, whose feats have now become almost historical. The episode of the Sultan of Zanzibar alone might supply an epic. No one, I think, has yet described with the

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necessary fire that hairbreadth escape when the three disguised undergraduates were stopped, while leaving the Charity Bazaar, on the very steps of the Corn Exchange by an invitation to return and talk with the wife of a missionary who had spent many years in Zanzibar and was familiar with the language. Nor has sufficient romance been given to that moment when the splendour of the Great Court first broke upon the vision of the Royal Cortège, and they stood motionless, with rolling eyes, while guttural "wah-wahs" betrayed their deep emotion; nor to that solemn scene when the monarch and his suite prostrated themselves with all the abandon of barbaric loyalty before the statue of the Great White Queen. One might, perhaps, pursue the career of one of the actors in these grotesque dramas to its academical close, an event which, to its lasting credit, long-suffering authority never prematurely hastened; watch him scale the great gate of Trinity, a feat never before accomplished even by the author of the famous "Guide to the Roofs of Cambridge," and follow him thence to the kitchen where, after a burglarious entry, he and his colleague in adventure (so runs what has by now become a folk-story) engaged in a gargantuan war with ham-bones, onions, legs of mutton, cauliflowers,

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trussed fowls, and all the other accumulated provision for a forthcoming banquet. Potatoes and cutlets hailed like small shot amid the crash of heavier comestibles, and the issue of the fight still hung ambiguous, when a porter, roused by the clatter of conflict and the shouting of the heroes as each boasted or bewailed the fortune of his arm, came rushing to the scene. Then it is told that the warriors made common cause against this contemner of the sanctities of combat, fell upon him, and, speedily overcoming a feint of resistance, plunged him, imploring mercy, protesting innocence, and promising inviolable secrecy, head first into a huge vat of soup that stood behind the kitchen-door, where, making all fast again, they left him, and in due course made their escape to the station in a hansom cab.

But such eccentricities are not of the essence of Cambridge ; they are not characteristic of that intimate yet trivial, busy yet uneventful, life which it is so great a solace to remember, so great a labour to describe. For the real essence one must turn to more normal types : to those whom we met and may still meet at every corner and on every staircase—the common schoolboy turning into the common man. One speaks readily enough of types and the normal,

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and indeed there are types which tend to reproduce themselves with more or less fidelity. But the factors which go to make up a single character are so many—there is room for such countless combinations of prejudices, affections, energies and interests—that the resemblance between any two combinations can never be more than approximate; there can never exist one wholly without that distinction and independence which we dignify with the title of personality. Suppose that we are at a loose end one evening after drinking coffee with a friend, and, feeling a distaste for work to which we are unhappily no strangers, stroll down the court towards our rooms past the ground-floor window of our good friend the Universal Host, to whom we have already made a scanty reference. His electric light glows redly through its paper shade, and there is a sound of voices from the open window. We look in—sure enough he is “At Home.” His three chairs and sofa are already occupied, and a cloud of cigarette smoke curls slowly to the window through which it is caught suddenly by the draught into the open air. We hesitate, thinking with discomfort of the copy of Iambics (now three days overdue) waiting on our table. The clink of a syphon on a tumbler rim, and a chuckling laugh, decide us. We

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turn in through the half-open door. Our host is there, as one always finds him, sitting in a deep armchair before the fire and sucking steadily at a pipe. He is a large, rather stout man, with heavy aquiline features and deliberate eyes. His slow gestures and drawling voice suggest a boundless inactivity, yet he assimilates with an all-embracing interest every incident of the perpetual concourse which throngs his rooms. He takes but little positive part in conversation himself, yet conversation never flags in his presence. It is all one to him whether talk runs on one of the endless varieties of "shop" which form the staple fare of the bulk of his visitors, or whether it ascends, panting and scarce articulate, to the loftier levels of politics, literature, or philosophy. He reads occasionally (in the infrequent intervals of hospitality) and erratically, without system and with very little purpose, though he makes a fetish of one or two subjects. He has a small library on the Duke of Wellington, of whom innumerable portraits, caricatures, and cartoons adorn his walls, while he possesses considerable knowledge of ecclesiastical vestments, though in other matters ecclesiastical he takes not the faintest interest. On other subjects his scraps of knowledge are as surprising as his tracts of

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ignorance. But, whatever the topic of discussion, he will play third to the protagonists with equal satisfaction, throwing in a word now and then to bridge a chasm or emphasising a crucial position with a languid question. When he laughs, he does so loud and heartily, throwing his head well back till his body arches itself in the cavity of his enormous chair. He is always impeccably dressed; his straight black hair brushed to a smoothness as glossy and invariable as that of a mirror. Nothing ruffles him, nothing bores him, nothing passes him by. His passivity has a positive quality which shows itself in a kind of moral and intellectual hospitality. His door is never shut, whoever asks admittance. He grudges no expenditure in food, drink, tobacco, or sympathy. The most diverse characters meet there, as it were, in sanctuary. Hospitality is his atmosphere, his sitting-room his natural world, which he scarcely leaves eight hours out of the twenty-four. It is symbolical of his character that boot-leather is his only economy. He never wears anything but pumps, so little is the friction of his progress through the world. He has been seen in pumps in Piccadilly, and at a railway-station in Central Europe. He has bicycled eighty miles in them (for, in spite

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of his constitutional lethargy, he is capable of great feats of endurance), worn them in chapel, in the Senate-house, at garden parties, at funerals, at every species of ceremony and festivity. He is wearing them now, of course, for he has not left his staircase, except to walk across the court, since he got up at half-past eleven. It is early yet, and his rooms are only occupied by the relics of a coffee-party. On a little stool opposite to him, and at the corner of the hearth, sits a strange, stiff figure, with wild eyes and seditious red hair, dressed in an untidy dark suit and bedroom slippers, and still wearing his gown and a dreadfully battered cap, which he has never taken off since Hall. He is holding forth now, in a high monotonous voice, on the last iniquity of the Liberal party, illuminating his diatribe with a wealth of florid metaphor. He brooks no contradiction, and has always a battery of facts to turn on any opposition. There seems something strangely out of character in his political attitude. Indeed, he was, until a week or two ago, a violent Socialist, pro-Boer, and general anti-everything. His conversion was in the nature of a revelation. It happened in an instant, almost in the middle of a sentence. Without any apparent cause or motive, in the midst of one of his favourite

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diatribes he was, to the amazement of the company, suddenly and irrelevantly born again. When he diverges into other subjects, his views are still almost rabidly revolutionary. He speaks of the Dons as though they were tyrants or imbeciles to a man. He has all the austerity of the true *sans-culotte*. His only pleasure seems to be the neglect of authority, and in that he takes an almost sensuous delight. Not long since he was summoned before the Dean for reading Plato in chapel. A fierce argument ensued ; he pointed out that he came to chapel for the Dean's pleasure, not his own, but that he considered it a duty to himself not to waste his time and let his mind lie fallow during his enforced attendances. Still, the order was not withdrawn. On the next Sunday he had a Bible bound in the cover of a yellow-back, and this he studied with savage ostentation throughout the service. A still more acrimonious interview resulted, to be followed by a correspondence no less bitter, and, in the end, his further attendance at Divine service was dispensed with. In this affray, as in many others, our host played an honourable part, acting as mediator between the contending forces. Indeed, had it not been for his protection, it is extremely improbable that the

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rebel would still be among us. When he first came to Cambridge a distracted, lumbering, puppy-limbed freshman, he was driven by a combination of parents, schoolmasters, and Dons into taking the Classical Tripos. But the aridity of its purely linguistic exercises, his own triumph in having at last broken from the school tradition and the consequent thirst for a newer knowledge and a more personal experience, soon drove him into revolt. He cut lectures, classes, verses and papers, right and left, with an almost fanatical determination. Before his second term had passed, his position became extremely precarious. He was hauled repeatedly, and conducted the consequent interviews with a rancorous and sneering insolence, which nearly proved fatal to him. At last, by a happy chance, he met with our friend. In a short time it was arranged that he should take moral science, instead of classics. He flung himself into the new study with ardour, stacked his room with books and pamphlets in every language, and launched upon a course of reading almost superhuman in its scope. In a few months there was not a subject on which his energies had not laid violent hands. His mind became a chaos of inordinate and arrogant opinions. He read convulsively night and day, and spent

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the interval thundering crude logic at the imperturbable ears of his new friend in a slow and torturing progress towards sobriety and co-ordination. When the stream of ordinary after-dinner *flâneurs* began to flow into the room, his tirade would gradually cease, and he would sometimes sit for an hour or so, stiff and morosely silent, in a corner, frowning and nursing his knee, and untidily smoking, or rather devouring, cigarettes, which he held mistrustfully between clumped fingers as though in perpetual terror of an explosion, thrusting them occasionally into his mouth, and sucking noisily and defiantly till the end glowed and spluttered, and the long ash dribbled down his waistcoat and trouser-legs.

For the moment he is stammering and fulminating through an argument unchecked, for there are only two other people in the room, neither of whom is likely to thrust an obtrusive personality across the flow of any intercourse. The first of them, indeed, seems strangely out of place in such surroundings. One marvels to find so shy and reserved a spirit familiarly seated at this market-place of common minds. He speaks seldom, and, if others are present, with an almost painful effort. As a rule, he sits in the corner, pipe in mouth, a rapt and melan-

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choly look upon his pale thin face, in which the long sharp nose and narrow beetling forehead make an unusual angle that gives the whole head a curious obliquity. It is a strange forehead, so straight that it seems to lean forward, as though perpetually bent to the study of some insoluble problem. The wry silky hair branches upwards and outwards in every direction so capriciously that it almost seems to writhe in a common effort with the pale forehead beneath it. The eyes cower away under lowering brows, and the whole face is only redeemed from sullenness and gloom by the fine and sensitive lines of the mouth and chin, which have, none the less, a rather ironical curl about them. He speaks seldom and very quietly, but, although it is obvious that miscellaneous society discomforts him, his manner, when he does speak, is firm, and without any trace of shyness. Indeed, he treats our host with an ease that has in its blend of affection and irony a mildly parental flavour. Music appears to be his passion, and he spends hours of the morning grinding ecstatically at the pianola which stands in a corner of the room. The selection of music is always of his choosing, and he often plays for an hour or more in solemn solitude before the owner of the instrument is out of bed. When

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at last the sluggard rolls sleepily into breakfast in his pyjamas, he gets no greeting but an abstracted nod, after which he sits down and placidly consumes his haddock and poached eggs to the accompaniment of the more mellifluous melodies of Schubert or Mozart, for these are his visitor's especial favourites. To the bulk of us he is rather an enigma—a thing, that is, which we tacitly ignore, for the mind of youth turns unconsciously from anything which promises a problem. Our chief interest in him is as a composer of lampoons and topical songs, for which he has an extraordinary dexterity. His setting of "The Walrus and the Carpenter," with its "oyster fugue," in the mock tragedy of which one hears the little victims, unconscious of their doom, excitedly, delightedly, "all hopping through the frothy waves and scrambling to the shore," is a constant favourite. We realise nothing of the real essence of his nature—of the passionate hours he spends polishing and tearing at raw, emotional, sentimental, confusedly feverish scraps of poetry, which he brings almost daily for our host's criticism. Our host, I think, often wishes he were as ignorant of this phase as ourselves, for even his tact and good-nature are not always equal to the situation. The poet insists on candour, and he has

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an unerring instinct when kindness withholds it. On the other hand, he is intolerant of adverse criticism. The least suggestion of it sends the blood in a wave to his pale forehead; he becomes petulantly and incoherently sarcastic, paces the room uneasily, and leaves it abruptly, not to return perhaps for three or four days, when ten o'clock one morning finds him seated at the pianola as usual, probably with a new manuscript in his pocket, and another day passes serenely and uneventfully, without reference on either side to the distresses of the last encounter.

The third occupant of the room this evening is a tall, rather stout man, clean shaven, with large, very round glasses, whose whole pose and bearing give an impression of extraordinary repose and detachment. He talks in a low, precise voice, and seems to have a constant supply of the sanest and most definite opinions, which he expresses with the nicest choice of language. His main interest is plainly in matters æsthetic, but he listens pleasantly to every topic. His habits are as neat as his opinions. His panelled room on the first floor of the old buildings are furnished like the drawing-room of a country cottage—painted white (instead of the conventional green), and bright with prettily flowered chintzes and pleasant water-colours. His dress

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is always exactly the same—a dark blue suit and strawberry-pink tie, with a white shirt and widely winged collars. He plays no games, but takes, every afternoon, a slow and majestic walk in the neighbourhood of the river. He dines in Hall as seldom as possible, preferring a quiet and luxurious meal in his own room, with a fried sole, a cutlet *soubise*, a savoury, and a quarter-bottle of champagne. He reads a great deal on unconventional lines, and plays delicately by himself, or to the audience of a single friend, on a baby Broadwood grand until one o'clock every night, when he has a cup of cocoa, concocted with scrupulous care, and goes leisurely to bed.

He is listening now with mild amusement to the tirade of the occupant of the stool, and is on the point of planting a trim little sarcasm, when there is a sound of approaching bustle from the court. Our host's name is shouted from fifty yards away in a descending third, and hard on his answering shout his door is thrown open, and another party bursts into the room. At the entrance of the leader of this party, we are all of us suddenly thrown into a condition of expectant passivity. Even the wild one stops in his tirade, and, with a drawling "Hullo, Cully !" resigns himself to geniality. For the newcomer

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is, in truth, the college comedian. His happy destiny glows from every feature. He is a short, square man, of a rolling, rather awkward gait, every motion of which betrays his exuberant energy. He whistles, snaps his fingers, shrugs his shoulders, and kicks at pebbles as he goes, tossing the book he carries up into the air at every other step, and catching it again with every sign of satisfaction ; at one moment he raps a tattoo at a window behind which he sees the occupant working, at another throws a jest over his shoulder to a passer-by, at another shouts an invitation to a friend a hundred yards away across the court. He has a wonderful face, every feature of which seems endowed with independent vitality. It is continually in motion, continually in the process or on the point of change. One can hardly believe that human features could be capable of such a range of expression. Emotion works no subtle changes on it, for his brain is not of a subtle order, but every adventure of his spirit marches with colours flying across his face from brow to chin. He seems at the mercy of some capricious power that plays his mind upon a wire and twists his face like putty. His genius is that of catchword, antic, and blunt repartee. Its reproduction on paper is impossible, yet he and his

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kind father three-fourths of the merriment of the University—and, indeed, of the whole world—for every one of those quips and catch-phrases which from time to time run through us like tidal waves must, if one had the clue, be deducible from some such fountain-head as this. Our friend's conversation is almost entirely composed of these flowers of wit, into which his personal magic seems always able to breathe a fresh and peculiar vitality. The delight and simple gusto with which he brandishes a new discovery, his affectionate fidelity to an old one, make him irresistible. To be with him is to laugh with him ; yet, having left him, it is impossible to recall a single definite cause of all our merriment. He pervades and dominates the whole college. When he is gay (and that is on ninety-nine days out of a hundred), we bask in his gaiety ; on the rare occasions when he flags, we sink into gloom. If by some rare malice of Fortune headache, toothache, or catarrh attack him, his plight is pitiable. His quaint features are drawn into a burlesque epitome of woe. His entire vocabulary merges in a groan. He clasps his head and invokes the whole Theogony.

Luckily, to-night is not one of these sad occasions. He enters with a clatter, dragging behind him a reluctant figure, which we hear

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protesting down the passage the proximity of the Tripos and the vast amount of work to be got through by the end of the week. Indeed, the protestant actually carries a note-book under his arm, and, after a languid interchange of courtesies with our host, settles down in a corner and studies it religiously throughout the remainder of the evening, keeping all the time sufficiently in touch with what goes on around him to be able every now and then to throw in a word of his own—words which, partly from the extreme deliberation of his utterance, partly from the untidy way in which his remarks come spluttering through the Three Castles cigarette perpetually pendent from his lip, have always an intensely personal flavour. Untidiness is indeed his natural atmosphere. His distaste for the razor is notorious, and it has been observed that, whatever the occasion and whatever the rest of his attire, he is always to be seen in grey flannel trousers. Indeed, it is believed that if all his clothes were of the same suit at any given moment of time, he would not long survive the unwonted splendour. He excels as a humorous speaker, possessing a vein of innocent yet artful fatuity peculiarly his own. He has a pretty talent for light verse, too, and is the mainstay of the College Magazine, to the

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editors of which he is, none the less, a source of constant perturbation. For his "copy" has to be extracted at the sword's point, and, when at last it does appear on the extreme verge of our going to press, it comes scrawled on half-sheets of note-paper and the backs of envelopes or haul-cards, from which it has to be collected and pieced together in a laborious recension that often involves considerable feats of scholarship. Yet this extraordinary dispersity goes hand in hand with a great power of mental concentration. His languidly individual humour makes him a welcome guest at every dinner-party (he is always late for dinner), he represents the college at every kind of sport, though he always turns out under protest, and he never seems to be in his own rooms after breakfast, to which he seldom sits down before ten o'clock—yet he is a scholar of his college, and always succeeds in getting Firsts in his Mays. He seems able to work at any place and at any time. He can learn more out of someone else's note-book, while he is brushing his hair, than most men can from a library of volumes and a regiment of coaches. Even now while we are all talking about the afternoon's football match, in which he took part with his usual distinction, he sits in the corner sleepily turning over pages,

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and though (to judge from the drawling commentary which distils intermittently from his lips) no word of our conversation escapes him, one feels, when after half an hour or so he shuffles across to the piano and begins to jingle out distracted fragments of the latest comic opera, that the other department of his brain has been working all the time at full speed and full concentration. He is displaced from the piano before many minutes have passed—to our no small relief, for his jingling is, to tell the truth, of the most desolate description, and it is the comedian who detaches him, faintly protesting, from the music-stool and takes his place. By comparison with his predecessor, the comedian is a virtuoso; he can play half a dozen bars of almost every hall and musical comedy tune of the last twenty years, supporting the melody in every case with a left hand vamp miraculous in its weight and regularity of rhythm. His face glows with honest pleasure as he pounds along on his resistless course, oblivious of false notes and wonderfully elliptical phrases. Then he has three comic songs of unfailing popularity. The origin and purpose of these compositions is wrapped in mystery. No one else has ever been heard to sing or whistle them. Indeed, it is impossible to

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imagine anyone wishing to do so, and even more impossible to imagine the mind that could have first conceived their almost stupendous innocence and imbecility. It may be that he himself composed them, but whether that be so or not (and he always most vehemently denies the charge) he has long since made them as characteristic of himself as is the "Eroica" of Beethoven. He never sings anything else, and we ask nothing else of him. Yet his enthusiasm in the performance and our enjoyment of it never diminish. It is not to laughter or gaiety or any energy of mirth that they move us. We listen in silence, almost with veneration. The swinging banality of their rhythms, the colossal and colourless fatuity of their phrases, fill us with a divine carelessness. We bask as in the dawn of time, and a vast and meaningless contentment bathes us when at last we slide with one voice into the abysmal folly of their choruses :

"They thought it was the Joko,
But they knew her by the boko;
The-ey knew her by the pimple,
By the pimple on her nose."

Their infinite inanity whirls one, like a mystic rapt by the repetition of his own name, up into the void, where reason is not, nor thought, her stern and ineffectual child.

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It is now near twelve o'clock. The wild-man and the poet have drifted away. The æsthete left at ten to enjoy a game of patience before beginning work, and we are just finishing the classic chorus for the second time when the door is flung open once more with a gust of laughter and confused cries. It is evidently the fag-end of a dinner-party on its way to bed, which the sound of our chorus has diverted. The singer is off the music-stool in a minute and a brisk dialogue with the leader of the party ends in a mock struggle, in which half the room, willingly or unwillingly, take a hand. Chairs are overturned; cushions fly; there is a crash of glass, and the electric light dances on its wire like a signal lantern in a storm. In a few minutes we have all sifted down again into seats on sofa, chair, or floor, but our assembly has lost its old repose. A Dionysian restlessness pervades us. The comedian and the leader of the dinner-party (a tall, fresh-coloured man with a staccato manner and a kind of reckless serenity of bearing) keep up a fusillade of witticisms, which ends in a long and entirely fictitious account by the newcomer of the supposed entry of the comedian's newly purchased horse at Cottenham races. The climax of the epic is reached when the un-

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fortunate animal has the ill-luck to twist its wooden leg in the tram lines on the way to the station—and another scuffle is narrowly averted. The rest of the invaders take little part in the general conversation. One of them, a very small man in his fifth year, who is still conducting a rearguard action with the fourth “M.B.,” is sitting huddled in a corner of the sofa blinking sleepily above the rim of an enormous whisky and soda, on the brink of which he retrieves himself every few minutes with a start, just as one begins to fear that he is going to topple over into its depths, so tiny does he look behind the gigantic tumbler. Next to him lounges a huge and scowling barbarian, captain of the rugger fifteen. An odd mixture of good humour and ferocity, whose outbursts of savagery are due rather to the exuberance of unusually animal spirits than to any real malignity of disposition. At the moment he is engaged in an unintelligible argument with his other neighbour, an argument which, on his side, takes the form of short arm jabs fiercely and frequently administered, and, on the other, finds intermittent expression in a flow of voluble but necessarily incoherent protest. Just behind these the last member of the dinner-party, a notorious incompetent who

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is every one's friend and his own most constant enemy, is endeavouring to explain in a rambling, high-pitched, and rather querulous voice how it was that he forgot to post the notice of the afternoon's soccer match and caused the college to be raided at three o'clock by eleven furious men of John's, who had been shivering on the ground for half an hour waiting for our own eleven to put in an appearance. All this time people are dropping in from the court, and lounging off to bed. The room is blue with cigarette-smoke and clamorous with a dozen independent and simultaneous conversations. Our host has never left his chair and, but for the crowing laugh which every now and then pierces the surrounding din, one would conceive him oblivious of its progress. Even the last diversion, which results in a high kicking competition at his electric light, leaves him unmoved, and when at last, towards half-past one, the long right leg of the anecdotist shatters the globe to a hundred fragments and plunges the room in darkness, we leave him lighting his fiftieth cigarette with unimpaired serenity, apparently no more inclined to slumber than when we first disturbed him some four hours ago.

CHAPTER THE TENTH

AN EVENING OUT OF COLLEGE

BUT it must not be supposed that all of us pass our nights thus inactively. Some spend strenuous hours at the Bridge table, competing with strange zeal for stakes of half a crown or a shilling a hundred, taking no respite from our arduous play except when the routine of the game brings us an enforced ten minutes' leisure and we stroll out of the smoky room into the quiet of the court, to fill our lungs and listen to the song of the nightingales rising and falling from Erasmus' walk. There was a time, too, when every court and every byway echoed from dusk to midnight with the drumming of the ping-pong ball, and many such transitory passions have no doubt compelled and will again compel the willing mind of youth from soberer pursuits. Then some are devotees of the theatre, and every now and then Guy Fawkes day or some other event provoking national or local enthusiasm concentrates the

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entire energy of the University on a demonstration which usually culminates in a bonfire in the market-place. It is strange on such a night to observe how surely, yet with what seeming lack of prearrangement, every section of us is drawn into the execution of a common purpose. The counter efforts of town and gown authorities are alike fruitless, and by half-past eight the market-place and all its converging thoroughfares are blocked with men (mostly in cap and gown), while in the centre a spirited conflict is in progress between the police and the ring-leaders of the demonstration about the spluttering of an embryo bonfire. Torches dart and waye. Blue figures rush in and out ineffectually trampling, a whirl of smoke or a fountain of sparks answering every outburst of activity. But the fire has already too strong a hold. Masked by the friendly crowd small foraging parties slip into the arena, now from one side, now from another, with arms full of fuel, which, after a brisk encounter with authority, finds its way into the fire. Palings and hoardings are torn down from vacant sites or even from one or other of the public works which are in progress about the streets of the town. In half an hour the blaze is so strong that no one can get within reach of it and, all the available supplies of fuel

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being by this time exhausted, it is allowed to burn itself out without further hindrance, the efforts of authority being now devoted to the apprehension of the leaders of disorder. The proctors, each with his pair of bull-dogs looking oddly early Victorian in their antiquated top hats, have spent the evening tacking rather helplessly about the outskirts of the mob, pouncing now and then on an undergraduate who has come out without the cap and gown which all of us must wear after dusk. The police have managed to apprehend a few malefactors in some act of destruction or obstruction, but the net result is small, and at about eleven o'clock we disperse to our respective rooms or colleges, hot and exhausted and cheerfully oblivious of the not inconsiderable damage which our efforts have caused to unoffending citizens, and of the various breaches of the law we have committed against the peace of our Lord the King, his Crown and Dignity. College orgies are less common with us than at the sister University. Now and then a successful week upon the river will be celebrated with a bump supper of unusual dimensions, and a haphazard display of fireworks in the court, which makes up in excitement what it lacks in spectacular effectiveness. Rockets bound cheerfully across the

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cherished lawns, Roman candles volley against windowpanes, squibs jump and splutter about the gravel walks, and the crowd of spectators, walking serenely in the very centre of operation, spends more time in dodging the fiery missiles than in enjoying their splendour. Occasionally, too, individual enterprise organises a more original entertainment. Of such a kind was the episode of the greasy pig, which some ingenious undergraduate once introduced into Caius, and the college hunted up and down for a brisk hour and a half until it found a safe if inappropriate sanctuary under the Master's dinner-table.

But there are many who spend their evenings in soberer pursuits. The weekly debates at the Union draw large audiences and form a kind of nursery for youth with political ambitions. And besides this almost every college has one or two debating or essay societies which meet with a praiseworthy regularity and devotion. Some, like the "Chetwynd" of King's and "The Magpie and Stump" of Trinity, are humorous by profession, but the life of these is more precarious, varying markedly from time to time according to the supply of available talent. In a small college such an institution is apt to degenerate into a merely social gather-

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ing, whose energies are, in general, confined to drinking punch and eating bananas, only rising now and then to the intellectual activity of an informal smoking concert.

The more serious organisations are the most durable, and these, though they usually centre in a particular college, generally collect members from outside. Trinity with its army of scholars, and King's, where all men have to make at least the attempt to take honours, support many such institutions. Some of them, such as the "Walpole" and "Decemviri" (the latter of which subtly combines the conviviality of a weekly punchbowl and annual dinner with the austerer labours of the spirit), are of considerable antiquity and, in spite of occasional vicissitudes, seem able to replenish themselves continually from the enthusiasm of succeeding generations. As an antidote to the frivolity of the last chapter we may well spend an evening at one of the more earnest of these assemblies. The scene of it shall be a first floor room in the Great Court of Trinity—a low-roofed room of curious corners, its plastered walls austere decorated with low book-cases, a plaster cast or two, and several oak-framed photographs of Greek sculpture. The electric light which hangs from the centre of the slanting ceiling is unlit, the only light



KING'S COLLEGE AND THE SENATE HOUSE.

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available being that which comes from a standard lamp in a green shade set upon the writing-table on the far side of the fireplace. As we stumble up the dark narrow staircase and, after a discreet knock, push open the door, we find the evening's proceedings on the verge of beginning. A wild-looking young man in a turned-down collar, with straggling fair hair and rather undetermined features, is just sitting down behind the standard lamp and nervously fingering a pile of manuscript. The owner of the room stands by the central table dispensing the last cups from a very battered and lopsided tin coffee-pot, while the whole room is filled with obscurely seen forms seated for the most part on cushions strewn about the floor. We refuse a cup of coffee (which we can see to be cold) and slide as unobtrusively as we can into seats behind the sofa. There are three or four minutes of awkward silence, broken only by some desultory whispering in one corner of the room and a stifled laugh from another, and then the man behind the lamp, after a rapid interchange of signs with our host, clears his throat, draws his chair up to the table, and begins to read his paper. The subject is one of the most extreme and comprehensive profundity. Let us say "that there is no such thing as altruism" and the

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reader attacks it with ardour. He reads very fast, with his head bent low over the paper, and propped on a hand which continually and feverishly pushes back the drooping pale hair from his forehead. Occasionally he stammers over a more than usually ill-written passage, stumbles, stops, and, just when you think he is going to disappear headfirst into chaos, abandons his manuscript and, raising a flushed and nervous face, launches, with much waving of the hands and nodding of the head, into a broken but perfectly well expressed and lucid extempore. Indeed, the last ten minutes of the disquisition are almost entirely independent of the manuscript which has evidently been composed in considerable haste. Five or six times, when you think he has finished, the stream breaks out again and runs a vehement, brief and irritable course. At last, however, the end really comes. The stream, even while in full turbulence, suddenly dries to a trickle and, no less suddenly, disappears. The reader throws himself back in his chair with a sigh of relief like one mentally out of breath, and there is a murmur and a shuffle of chairs and feet and cushions round the room. Somebody gets up to fetch the tobacco jar, and there is a *feu de joie* of matches, while pipes, which have gone out during the enforced inactivity

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of the last half hour, are lit again. Then silence falls. Its effect is strangely disconcerting. We are all just on the point of the most apposite remarks, the most searching questions, but this sudden dumbness stifles us. We forget what we were going to say. Silence continues. It becomes oppressive. We remember what we were going to say, but on reflection discover that it is not worth saying. Still silence. It is growing intolerable. The man who speaks now will deserve canonisation. Our host, finding the agony insupportable, feebly asks if any one would like more coffee. We are too petrified to do more than shake our heads. Besides, our recollections of its chill and dilute stream are not such as to encourage us to renew our acquaintance with it. However, the interruption suffices to break the spell. A preliminary gasp is heard from a thin metaphysician in the corner of the sofa. He leans forward, fixes the reader with a menacing eye and, after the gasp aforesaid (his remarks are always prefaced by a sound like an inexperienced singer practising the *coup de glotte*), says with a sort of cold obstinacy : “What you mean is that,” etc., etc. As a matter of fact, the metaphysician always says this to the reader of every paper he listens to as soon as the paper is finished. The remark almost

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always provokes a fury of disclaimer, and the present occasion is no exception to the general rule, for the statement is in truth wildly inconsistent with everything the paper contained. A brisk dialogue ensues, in which each party goes doggedly on elaborating his own point without any consideration of his opponent's. The rest of us begin to grow impatient; we are all of us so certain that we know what each of the disputants *really* means so much better than he does himself, and we are on the point of saying so, when we are forestalled by a philosopher from King's, who makes a dash for the fireplace, climbs on the curb, puts his back against the mantelpiece, and launches into a long harangue. First of all he tells the reader exactly what *he* has said, then he explains the metaphysician's meaning to *him* with equal certainty and detail, and finally launches into his own views. Unhappily he is less lucid in this exposition than in the preceding one. He has a singularly involved style of gesture and exegesis. He writhes against the overmantel, shrugging and twisting his shoulders, like an intellectual Atlas upbearing a world of argument. He is incessantly climbing on and off the curb, twisting his forelock between his forefinger and thumb, taking his pipe out of his mouth and stroking

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his forehead, chin, or the bridge of his nose with the stem of it. Meanwhile his periods get more and more involved, his manner more and more provocative. Before long he has completely abandoned the subject of the paper and passed to a minute analysis of the motives of human action in all ages. His flow of instances is copious, apt, and most divertingly expressed. One sees from the behaviour of his audience how unerringly he is able to pick out each man's particular weakness. There seems no reason why he should ever stop, when, in the midst of a more than usually tortuous parenthesis, he bites through the stem of his pipe, which drops with a crash into the hearth (he has almost turned his back on the room in the crisis of expression) scattering a cascade of sparks and ashes on the carpet. He stoops to retrieve it with an execration, and a minute or two is spent in stamping upon its glowing embers. By the time they are extinguished, the thread of his discourse is broken. He tries to recapture it, but he can never speak without a pipe in his mouth, and the mouthpiece of this one is now so broken that every time he closes his teeth on it they jar together and it shoots out on to the floor in a maddening parabola. In a minute or two he is driven back to his seat,

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where he immediately becomes the centre of a fusillade of question and controversy. Attention is quite withdrawn from the reader of the paper, who sits neglected behind his lamp, his subject and his argument alike forgotten, for by this time we are all in full cry after hares of our own finding. All round the room small groups and couples are hammering away at their favourite dissensions, hauling into position their favourite batteries. A good-looking young scholar from King's, who dresses with a sort of florid conventionality, in striking contrast to the wild untidiness which characterises the rest of the assembly, and represents the University at Queen's, is soon engaged upon a ferocious tirade against athletes, meaning thereby of course the conventional athlete. His rather hard, clever features (which, but for a certain coarseness of line, one might take as a type of Grecian regularity) curl with scorn; he rolls out his sarcasms with a conscious relish, letting them drip reluctantly and unctuously from his tongue. It is a favourite "turn" in this particular Society, and an encouraging audience soon gathers round him. Nor is the fury of the stream at all abated by the fact that there is no obstacle to provoke its course. Indeed, it seems to generate force by its own motion, and it is only stopped

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at last by a cold little wavering voice from the corner of the room, where a very attenuated, very weary-looking bachelor of Trinity has been crouching, speechless, and almost motionless, since the beginning of the evening. "After all, we must not forget," says the voice—and the production of even that tiny volume of sound seems to afflict its producer with an intolerable languor—"that it *is* possible to be a second string and an atheist." For the first time in the memory of mankind our friend is disconcerted. He hesitates—and is lost. For while he hesitates interest veers towards another centre of disputation. The argument here is theological, and, by the time our attention is attracted to it, has come well within the region of polemic. The parties to it are a young and rather nervous undergraduate of mystical tendency, who is popularly supposed to be on the verge of conversion to Roman Catholicism, and a fierce-looking scholar from Emmanuel, destined obviously for the Anglican Church, the typical cadences of which are already recognisable in his rather explosive style of declamation. The contest, though sufficiently diverting, is a sadly unequal one. The mystic is terribly vague in dialectic. His eye roves, his mouth opens, and the resulting sounds are more often inarticulate

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than intelligible. Indeed, he hardly ever gets beyond an aimless waving of the hands, and a "But, don't you see . . ." or "Oh, surely . . ." before the Anglican is upon him with some bludgeon of rhetoric which knocks all the breath out of his argument for the next several minutes. Whenever the conflict shows signs of flagging, a lean, dark, large-footed, bent-backed young fellow of John's in clerical dress, who lies extended in the largest armchair in the room, with his great gaunt knees thrust up like the angles of a cantilever bridge, plants some dexterous question which immediately stirs it again into fury. It is obvious that he knows much more of the subject of discussion than either of the principals, but, having none of their fanatic heat, he declines to be drawn into controversy and is able to give a malicious spirit full play with a mischievous ingenuity which never fails of its object. The result is that the audience tires before the performers, and the fury of the latter, when encouragement begins to fail them, gradually dies down, and, after a convulsive growl or two, lapses into silence. It is now hard upon midnight, and people are beginning to stray away to their own rooms. Those who belong to other colleges go perforce, and for the rest of the assembly the life is fast



TRINITY STREET AND KING'S PARADE.

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dying out of the discussion. The reader of the paper has withdrawn into a corner with the philosopher, where the two of them are comfortably nodding and gesticulating away in the confidential pursuit of truth, for they are enthusiasts, whose ardour finds little nourishment in the humours of general discussion. The metaphysician is still arguing, he is indeed very seldom known to do anything else. This time he is engaged in a most obstinate discussion with a flippant and rather inaccurately minded classical scholar, on the question of whether a man standing at the North Pole can still look North. The metaphysician maintains, no doubt with perfect accuracy, that he cannot. The other upholds the opposite view with equal pertinacity, making up with irrelevant little ironies (the point of which generally escapes their object) what he lacks in logic. Our host has begun to make tea for the survivors of the engagement, and we know that if we stay till that has got well into circulation, we shall have to ring our head-porter out of his beauty-sleep. So we make our way out into the quiet of the Great Court and trot home down Trinity Street, thinking all the way of the many profound truths we meant to utter but never could think of at exactly the right moment.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

WORK

IN looking back over the pages I have written, I seem to have said strangely little on the subject of work. It must not be supposed, however, that work plays no part in our lives. To most of us it is a continual and very genuine discomfort. Even at Cambridge the fiend examination dogs one. To begin with, one must pass the "Little-go," and this task alone keeps some of us occupied throughout the entire period of our residence. The name "Little-go" comes, I believe, from a game of hazard remarkably popular in the eighteenth century, so much so, indeed, that it is immortalised with a long catalogue of similar pastimes in the earliest Gaming Act on our Statute Book. The game itself has made way for other more complicated methods of losing money, but the examination still exists, and for the majority of us remains as much a game of hazard as ever. Indeed, it is told that one of the most eminent

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scholars in the University, now Master of his college, and revered throughout two continents for an almost uncanny familiarity with the Mussulman philosophy of the eleventh century, was never able to pass its mathematical branches at all, and had finally to be exempted from further efforts to do so by a special grace of the Senate. The majority of us, aided by the untiring zeal of coaches, do manage eventually to pass, but often only at the expense of considerable labour. We contrive, with a patience and devotion worthy of a nobler cause, to learn our Greek play by heart, only to find ourselves ploughed in mathematics, and then, after a term spent in the most sterile labours over sines and cosines, we come through the mathematics almost gloriously, but find that we have not retained a sufficient intimacy with Paley's "Evidences of Christianity" to satisfy the examiners. Some men go through this lamentable progress for two years or more and may, even then, have to go down unsuccessful. But, as a rule, college authorities insist on a more rapid conquest of this so-called "preliminary examination," and if an exception is made, it is generally in favour of some fortunate being who is regarded as likely to bring athletic distinction to the foundation to which

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he belongs—a distinction which to those in authority offers all the advantages, without any of the vulgarity or expense, of a good commercial advertisement. The “Little-go” past, the student has to decide whether he will go for honours or take a “pass” or “pol” degree. For a man who has any of the instincts of scholarship, there is no doubt that an honours degree in a subject with which his school teaching has already made him more or less familiar, is by far the easiest course. I have known a young gentleman who spent the entirety of his three years at Cambridge drinking Green Chartreuse, buying photographs of Miss Edna May and reading and re-reading the “Decline and Fall,” come out creditably high among the “Junior Ops” in the Mathematical Tripos, although he had not for full three years devoted five consecutive minutes to the study of its subjects. In the same way any reasonably good classical scholar could probably take a second in the Tripos in his first year. But probably neither he nor the admirer of Gibbon and Miss May could take an Ordinary Degree without at least a few weeks’ preparation. For, besides the “Special,”—an examination upon one chosen subject—a “pass man,” to get his degree, must also negotiate the “General,” which comprises

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several subjects of one or two of which any schoolboy is fairly sure to be more or less ignorant. For myself, being constitutionally incapable of solving the simplest of mathematical problems and having indeed abandoned all attempts to do so at a comparatively early age, I am always able to regard with respect anyone who has succeeded in getting through the "General," a respect which is, in some cases, only exceeded by my admiration for the coaches whose patience and untiring zeal has made the triumph possible. Nor is my reverence lessened by the fact that some of these same heroes may have previously waged an ineffectual struggle with the Tripos which I myself was fortunate enough to pass. For to be able to get through the Classical or Mathematical Tripos is a gift of God, which, if one possesses it, will save an infinity of labour, but there is hardly a man who would not have to undergo at least a week or two of honest toil if he wished to make certain of an "Ordinary Degree."

Almost everyone, therefore, has to submit to a certain amount of study at Cambridge.

At 9 a.m. any morning the town begins to fill with a struggling and reluctant crowd on its way to early lectures; at ten or so the bicycles of the pol-men begin slipping through

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the narrow streets to their coaches, and so the stream goes on until lunch-time, the blacks and blues of gown and college cap giving the ancient ways a creditable appearance of sobriety and devotion. For the great majority of men morning is the time for work. The authorities encourage the arrangement, and we ourselves like to feel that we have got the duty over for the day. What particular form each man's labours take depends of course on his subject. The unhappy medical man, who has innumerable examinations to contend with, is, or should be, in "labs." or lecture-rooms daily from nine o'clock onwards. The devotees of natural science fare little better, and a good deal of similar attendance is expected of the mathematician. The student of history is allowed, on the other hand, a larger proportion of private reading, and the classic is freest of all, lectures playing a very small part in his labours. The morning, therefore, will always find a certain number of people at work in their own rooms, or with their private coaches or tutors. That we (that is, the majority of us) enjoy our work or that any one takes very much trouble to make us do so, it would be difficult to maintain. We work because we know we must. Some of us live in fear of never passing the "Little-go" or failing in our Mays and being

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sent down. Those of us who are going to be doctors or clergymen know that we must make the effort to get through sooner or later. For those whose destiny is schoolmastering all depends on their degree—whether they are to end life as plump house-masters at Eton or Harrow, varying a life of dignified tyranny with an August on the moors, Christmas in Switzerland and Easter at Aberdovey or St. Andrews, or whether they are to moulder to an obscure and bitter extinction as narrow, petulant, ineffective ushers at some struggling private school. Even where there is no instant spur of this kind, there are the expectations of one's family to be considered. An unlooked-for success in the Tripos may materially alter the parental attitude on the question of bills which is almost certain to arise within a short time of the announcement of the result. The greater number of us, therefore, do attempt a certain amount of work. And we generally attempt it in the mornings, not driven by any irresistible impulse of enthusiasm from our beds to our books, but rather in the spirit in which we shave and brush our teeth—as a preliminary to more reasonable forms of human activity. I have said advisedly “attempt,” for the attempt is by no means invariably successful. To get

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to lectures, even at nine in the morning, is comparatively easy, though it is less easy to attend when one gets there. If one has no lectures the morning is apt to prove a succession of obstacles. To begin with, it is so much more difficult to get up when there is no definite point of time by which one must be up. After all it doesn't matter whether one begins to work at 9 or 9.5 or 9.15, and the consequence is that one generally gets up at about a quarter-past ten. Then, even when one has begun, there are continual interruptions. If one has rooms in college on the ground floor there is likely to be little else. For, however industrious a college may be, there are always a few members of it who, for one reason or another, need not, cannot, or will not work. It is also generally a characteristic of these do-nothings, that they cannot do it without company. When once they have breakfasted, visited the college reading-room, and studied the *Sportsman*, the *Sketch*, the *Tatler*, the *Bystander*, the *Field*, the *Sporting and Dramatic News*, and glanced apathetically at *Country Life*, the *Graphic*, the *Illustrated London News*, and the *Sphere*, they have no choice between the abyss of boredom and a tour of the court to interrupt their friends. If you live on the ground floor, you are their

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continual prey. In the throes of a more than usually cloudy chorus of Æschylus or one of Pindar's most dazzling similes, you are disturbed by a head poked through the open window between the muslin curtains. It surveys you languidly and asks for a cigarette. You rise to get the box, but the disturber is not to be so put off. "All right, old chap," he says cheerfully, "don't you trouble, I'll come in and get one." You protest that it is no trouble, but, before you have finished, he has pushed open your door and is lolling in the armchair. He lights a cigarette and puffs contentedly for a moment or two, until a light dawns on him. "Oh, I say," he breaks out, "are you working? What a chap you are! you're always working. I wish I could. As a matter of fact, I *am* working now, you know. Began yesterday. They've been writing to my governor and he's a bit upset. Beastly low trick, because I very nearly got through my Mays, you know. In fact, I should have done easily if I hadn't been sitting next to that fool Hunt whose writing I can't read. He would keep shoving his beastly papers across to me and I copied them down all wrong. Silly ass, and he's a scholar too, so I thought I was sure to be all right. But it's just my luck my name being Haynes, always get put between

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Hunt and that ass Hare, who generally gets pilled himself, so it's no good cribbing from him. I half thought of changing my name to Browne or something so that I could get shoved between a couple of scholars like Burns and Brain. But I'm still under age, confound it, so I've taken to work instead. Funny thing is I rather enjoy it. Me and Dick are going to work together, you know. We started yesterday on the 'Agamemnon.' He has the dictionary and I have the crib, and we get along like smoke. We were going to begin this morning at nine sharp, only Tomkins, whose dictionary we bagged yesterday, came and bagged it back in the evening without telling me. Rather sick he was about it too, silly little fool. I don't see what's the use of being clever like those sort of idiots, if you can't do without a dictionary for a day or two. By the way, that's what I really came in here for: to see if you'd lend me your dic. But I suppose you won't, as you're using it. Don't matter a bit, my dear chap. I'll easily get somebody else's, besides it can't be much after eleven yet, and there's heaps of time. You can't work too long at a stretch, you know, can you? Hate overdoing it."

After half an hour of this ingenuous but not very diverting prattle he leaves and strolls across

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to your next-door neighbour (who happens to be a "stinks" man) to try and borrow his Greek dictionary, leaving you to struggle back into touch with your obscure and unfriendly author as best you can. The worst of it is, you are perfectly certain that, before another half-hour is past, another head will be thrust through your curtains and Dick will maunder in to fill his pipe and *obiter* to look for his colleague and a Greek dictionary. It will be vain to refuse him the latter and tell him that Haynes has just gone on round the court. He will insist on sitting down to smoke a pipe and drink a bottle of Bass and explain to you how devilish hard he is working and what rot it is having to work in the summer term. From that he will pass on to discuss Haynes, and tell you with great solemnity what a pity it is that he is such a slacker, and how difficult it is to get him to take his work seriously and how much his father feels it, and so on and so on, till his pipe is finished and he finds it is 12.15, and remembers that he has a fellow coming to lunch at 12.45 and that he mustn't be late because they are going to motor to Mildenhall to play golf and they won't get two rounds in comfortably if they don't start at 1.15.

If you have rooms on the first or second floor

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you are safer from this kind of attack, though even that will not secure you complete immunity. But you are at least sure of a warning, for your drone will not, even in the extremity of boredom, climb a flight of stairs unless he is certain of a reception. He prefers to drift from doorway to doorway calling out the names of his friends above in a languid chant, recalling in its empty iteration and the weary interval of its recurrent notes, the May-cry of the cuckoo. If you are wise you will not answer him. But one is not always wise, and there is, moreover, the chance that the cuckoo may have something important to say—to ask you to lunch, for instance (for he is a pleasant fellow and hospitable) or to tell you that the match against Sidney in the afternoon is scratched, or what time the brake is starting to take the cricket team to St. Ives. In any case, if once you let him know you are in, nothing will stop him coming up, and, once up, the effort of ascent and the prospect of the further effort of descent intensify his reluctance to leave you. A couple of such visitors will devour a morning, and with the afternoon come other claims which one does not willingly put aside until the very eve of the Tripos. Cricket, football, hockey, golf, lawn-tennis, rackets, squash, the

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river, the track at Fenners, or the meet of the Trinity Foot Beagles make each in their season a claim which attains almost the solemnity of a duty. After that, if fortune favours, we may get in an hour's work before Hall, with which, for most of us, the working day closes. With the approach of the Tripos, or "Special," or whatever the crucial examination of our fate may be, the pace, of course, grows a little hotter. We give up our afternoon's exercise, have an early tea, and work regularly till Hall, after which we toil again from nine o'clock till eleven, and then take a short tour of inspection round the court to smoke a cigarette with a friend or two before going to bed. At such times even the drone's inactivity becomes galvanised into a kind of futile fever. He hovers about the courts in a state of continual protest. He supposes he is going to fail. He has had a beastly letter from his governor, and that old ass the tutor hauled him and gave him a rotten jaw on Tuesday. And it isn't as if he was a slacker, either. He can't help not being clever. That's more the governor's fault than any one's; and so he told him, but that only seemed to make the old chap angrier than ever. As a matter of fact, the governor isn't a fool at all: belongs to the Athenæum and takes in the

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Spectator and the *Nineteenth Century* and all that, though of course he *is* a fool too, really, if you come to think of it, or he wouldn't make such a fuss about this rotten old Trip. After all plenty of jolly good chaps have failed before now and, if he does fail, it won't be for lack of trying. It'll be simply his rotten luck, because he has worked jolly hard for the last fortnight, and the only reason he isn't working now is that some swine has pinched his Smith's "Smaller History of Greece," just when he wanted it, etc. As the week of the examination approaches, the fever of his protest becomes more and more intense, yet its actual commencement has an unexpected effect, producing a mood, which, were it a little more dignified, might pass for resignation. He seems actually to enjoy the torturing process during the short time for which he submits himself to it, for he drifts into every paper a quarter of an hour late and out again an hour before the end. The stuffy room; the dark-gowned figures bowed over the long narrow tables; the tense stillness, broken only by the sound of sighs and scratching nibs; the sight of so many tortured beings rolling, with uneasy gestures, their faces up to heaven, chewing penholders, combing with distracted hands their wild and tangled hair;

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the lean invigilators watching grimly over all—none of these things seem able to depress him. He sits there, the one oasis of serenity in the whole desert. Now he writes a word or two, now looks nonchalantly round the table, now draws a face on his blotting-paper. Soon he begins talking audibly to his neighbours, not so much with a view to disturbing them or extracting information, but simply to afford himself relief from the tedium of the proceedings. It is a relief to us all when at last he strolls unconcernedly up to the invigilator's table, deposits a couple of sparsely and irrelevantly covered sheets, and passes out into the sunshine, jeering at the friends between whose humped and anxious figures he ambles to the door. Of course he fails; he expects, and seems, indeed, to desire nothing else. He is not even "excused the General" (*i.e.*, allowed to go in for a "pol" degree by taking the "Special" alone), and this really seriously annoys him. He seems to take it as an outburst of personal spite on the part of the examiners, and, from that moment, regards himself as a tragic example of assiduous and unrewarded merit. After this, he says pathetically, people oughtn't to be surprised if he goes to the devil. However, the Long Vacation

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supervenes, and he goes to coach at a remote East County Vicarage instead, and before six months are over has astonished his friends by taking a First in both examinations, and settling down to a blameless and prosperous career in the City of London. It is not, however, usual to find the Tripos taken thus casually. Few of us are proof against both the fear of failure and the hope of distinction, and, of the two incentives, the last is by far the most tyrannical. The ambitious scholar drifts easily into a life of extreme asceticism and devotion. He becomes oblivious of time, for there are no fixed points to which he must adapt himself. The more advanced his studies, the less does he feel the need of lectures and the less do college authorities insist on his attendance at them. His private tutor (if he goes to one) is probably as erratic as himself, having, by years of studious solitude, developed in a geometrical progression those very qualities and habits to which his pupil is beginning to fall a victim. His meals he can take in his own or a friend's rooms when he wants them. For exercise (if he requires it) the Trumpington road is free to him sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, and as for sleep—his bed is always ready and there are no household arrangements to be disturbed, how-

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ever late he seeks or leaves it. The consequence is that many scholars fall into habits of singular irregularity. They become entirely independent of the outside world, and being in bondage to no daylight duties, grow daily more and more creatures of the moon. For, whatever science and careful parents may maintain, the brain works more freely and at greater pressure in the timeless silence of the night. True the body is fresher in the morning, but its very freshness seems to raise a counter activity to that of the mind. Real concentration is easier when the body is tired and when one's closed curtains and single lamp make, as it were, a tiny cell of energy in the great void of peace; when day's immense conspiracy against the senses is abandoned, and the whole world, no longer clamorous for our distraction, seems voicelessly conspiring in a common ministry of silence. At such a time, the physical energies are sunk in a common eclipse with those of the external world. The body becomes a mere shell for the mind, which races through the swift hours so centred, so absorbed in its immediate function, that it is perhaps three or four o'clock before the senses reawaken to physical necessities. One rises to find daylight showing faintly between the curtains. The

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fire is fallen to a little heap of grey ashes. One realises that one is hungry, that both body and brain are cramped and cold with their long concentration. The desire to stretch becomes imperious. One stretches long and luxuriously, but even that does not dispel the curious stiffness of the mind. The streets, seen through the narrow opening of the curtains, afflict one with a sense of desolation. In the night, however empty they may be, they are never wholly lifeless. The blink of stars, the square glow of a lit window here and there, the very formlessness of light and shadow, seem indicative of a vitality submerged but not extinguished. But now the lines are all vacant and rigid. There is neither light nor dark ; all is cold, all featureless. It is the difference between sleep and death. Suddenly silence is broken by the jargon of innumerable bells. Thud, jangle, tinkle, boom, one after another, one with another, fateful and petulant, harsh and mellow, decrepit and bold, in every tone from deprecation to authority, they warn you of the marching hour, and with the last note silence falls deeper than before. You leave your books open on the table, your pipe still hot with ashes at their side, and tumble into bed, to pass, almost without transition, from energy to the abyss of sleep.

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A life so ordered reverses the functions of night and day. It is perhaps eleven before you regain consciousness. Your thoughtful "gyp" has piled your breakfast in a pyramid before the fire, and a kettle is singing on the trivet, in case you should wish to shave. But that ceremony you probably postpone *sine die*, so the kettle is used to make tea, and you sit down to breakfast in dressing-gown and slippers. Half an hour finds you at your books again. At three o'clock you dress and (possibly) shave. At four you stroll across the court to a friend's rooms to tea, a meal which, now that you dispense with lunch, acquires a new significance. However, there is still an hour and a half left for work before Hall, which you attend without fear of losing time, for it would be impossible to dine more quickly anywhere than in that babel of rattling plates and clashing weapons. So the world's day ends, and by nine o'clock your day begins, and drives onward stern and solitary to another dawn.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

PLAY

YET when everything is said the mechanism of work at the University is as nothing compared with the vast machinery of play. Although, as I have already said, the reverence for athletics at Cambridge is much less marked than it is at the public schools, Cambridge life still shows traces of that fundamental principle of British education, the belief that, while limitless exercise is essential to the production of a sound body, a sound mind can only be produced by a studious and deliberate inactivity. One is not therefore surprised to find sport of all kinds carefully and elaborately organised. The basis of what one may call official sport is of course college competition, by means of which individual merit is sorted out and made worthy of the higher honour of University representation. Head, as most characteristic of all college sports, one may put the river, for it is the river which attracts the most concentrated energies of the University



THE BACKS

PLAY

and the keenest interest from the outside world. The life of the rowing man is indeed a hard one. Its labours and its glories have been the frequent theme of chronicle and song. No other sport demands of its victims a devotion so assiduous and austere. No other seems (to the common mind) to offer pleasures so painfully disproportionate to the attendant toil. From the very day of his arrival the authorities of the Boat Club lie in ambush for the freshman. Furtive eyes appraise his sinews and calculate his weight. He is flattered by invitations, allured by promises of fame, and before his first October has begun to wane, one may see him launched in a tub upon a sluggish stream still shadowed by factory chimneys and oily with the excrements of commerce, and performing, nose to nose with an arrogant and didactic senior, painful and apparently senseless exercises. On drives the weary discipline from day to day. With the first chills of winter he will (if he is an apt pupil) find himself transferred to an eight, and pursued from the towpath by arrogance upon a bicycle. Even spring, when the whole world stretches and draws warm breaths of the approaching summer, brings him no relief from toil, for March plunges him in the throes of his first bumping race, the most agonising probably

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that he will ever have to undergo. For the Lent races have none of the pomp and gaiety of the Mays, that week of festival which comes upon the sluggish life of Cambridge like an annual excitation of the blood. The train of straining labouring boats lumbers down the river under no fire of female eyes, between no galleries of ranged canoes and picnic carriages, with no glitter of sunlight on flannels, frocks and parasols. They know not even the flattering ease of sliding seats. There is no leaf yet upon the stunted willows, no light of flower upon the sullen pastures. Doggedly the coaches clatter on their ancient horses down the bank beside them, jogging high above the grim crowd which, in grey shorts or flannel trousers, surges along the towpath encouraging its champions with a babel of hoarse shouts and grinding rattles. Such joy as men win from the blind agony of battle one may conceive our freshman winning from these days of contest. That he enjoys any softer pleasures is scarce to be believed. It is indeed pitiable to see with what abandon he delivers himself, when the racing is over, to the simple joys of tobacco, butter, new bread and potatoes. Can it be right, one wonders, in these subtle days so to magnify the primitive pleasures? None the less, if our freshman has talent, the next term

PLAY

will find him in training again, sprinting before breakfast to the Grange Road pillar box and back, and going once more with unimpaired devotion through the daily treadmill. This time, however, the prize is larger. To row in the May boat is a genuine distinction. To row in one of the leading boats on the river means a Leander tie, which even scholars of Trinity have been known not to despise. Moreover, if we do well and the college is in a generous mood, they may submit to a general whip for funds and send the boat to Henley, and Henley still remains, even for those who take part in the contest, perhaps the pleasantest festival of the sporting year. Then again the Trial Eights will be going out in the Autumn, and our freshman begins to nourish a secret hope that if he shows up well in the races he may get a place in one of them, after which—who knows? In his heart of hearts he thinks that worse men have rowed at Putney. And to the dizziness of that ambition we may leave him, standing cheerfully, even with exultation, upon the threshold of a three years' slavery.

No other sport is so severe a mistress. Even the runner, for all the strictness of training which his ambition entails, enjoys an easier fame. True the recent introduction of inter-

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college competitions has enlarged the field of his energies, but even with this and the preparation for occasional stranger's races at the sports of other colleges, his slavery is less strict and less continual. It is only in the Easter term, when the University sports and the greater contest at Queen's loom into imminence, that real devotion becomes necessary. For the rest the professional football and cricket players have a comparatively luxurious life. There are hardly more than eight weeks of cricket ; serious Rugby football does not last over Christmas ; and, although the Association league runs on into the Easter term, it makes a less stern demand upon its votaries. The same may be said of the countless other fields of athletic ambition. Hockey, golf, lawn-tennis, real tennis, rackets, lacrosse, water-polo, cross-country running, steeple-chasing, billiards, even chess, each supply inter-University contests, and each, in consequence, maintains its troop of devotees ; but such pastimes have a less strong hold upon popular imagination, and, so far as their effect upon the common life of the University is concerned, we may leave them without further description.

But the most enjoyable and, in a way, the most characteristic aspect of University sport,

PLAY

is not that which we have called the professional. There are other arenas besides those in which men struggle with so much devotion for college and University honours. All of us, except the most abstracted scholar, need some form of relaxation, and few of us have been educated to seek it elsewhere than in connection with some description of bat and ball. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that our collective desire has devised a hundred means of gratification.

In the summer there are innumerable lawn-tennis courts scattered about the river-banks and the shady playgrounds that lie between the town and the endless fields of Cambridgeshire, while, for those who find even the mild discipline of the tennis-court too irksome, there is the river, where a man can waste time as pleasantly as in any place on earth. If he be really lazy he has only to take his pipe and pouch, with perhaps a novel and a bag of cherries, down to the boat-house behind Garrett Hostel Bridge. There he can sink into a canoe and paddle to some convenient berth under the bank, where the lawns of King's or Trinity slope sunnily down to the water. Here he may drive his paddle into the mud on the outside of his boat and, thus

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fenced in against whatever current there may be in that most indolent of streams, drowse away the hours till the cramps, which are inseparable from long sitting in a canoe, drive him to a reluctant energy. Under this stimulus he will perhaps paddle lazily down past the crumbling walls of Clare garden, which seem kindred and coeval with the river banks, so moss-grown, so crannied with bright flowers and sprouting grass are their ancient sides; or he may adventure further past the winding reach of Trinity and her rolling water meadows, sentinelled by drowsy elms and backed by the square stateliness of Wren's Library, to where the steep walls of John's on either side make a luminous Venetian darkness of the narrow stream. Or in the other direction there is the long green slope leading up to the rather stark dignity of the west face of King's Chapel, beyond which the tall avenue of Erasmus' Walk follows the left bank, while, opposite, the sheer brown walls of Queen's stand dreaming in the sun, and at the side her ancient oriels muse over the walled quiet of the garden at their base. In such mild enterprises one may pass the time till Hall, or, if one feels in more adventurous mood, there is the boat-house on the brimming upper river above the mill. From



CLARE BRIDGE AND COLLEGE.



PLAY

this point you have a new world before you. In a Rob Roy or Canadian canoe (the only craft for the upper river, where a punt or tub is as appropriate as a motor-boat on the Grand Canal) one can work one's way leisurely up past the bathing sheds, threading quiet meadows and dark coppices in a course so winding, so beset with snags and shallows, that every mile becomes an odyssey, and one reaches Grantchester Mill pool at last with the triumph of an adventurer swimming after moons of labour into some silent and enchanted sea. But many, though they shrink from the regularity and earnestness of college cricket or lawn-tennis, prefer a more conventional and energetic form of exercise than this. For them there is always to be found a supply of miscellaneous cricket clubs, which pass their time playing scratch matches or touring among the neighbouring villages and hamlets. There are few pleasanter ways of passing a summer day than on one of these excursions, though the earliness of the Cambridge term, which ends in the first week of June, makes the question of weather something of a lottery. There are no bleaker grounds in England than those which the industry of rustic sportsmen has dotted about our wind-swept plain, and many of them add to

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the difficulties of wind and light an inequality of surface which oftens proves fatal to a dexterity bred on more conventional playgrounds. One remembers many days on which high hopes and net-bred confidence were thus brought to nothing. Such a day starts badly, for there is an evil wind from the north-west, which occasionally blows up a thin squall of rain. We reach the village cold, not over dry, and many of us rather short in temper, to find our opponents assembled in front of the thatched shed which serves as a pavilion. The aspect of the ground adds little to our good humour, for it has a wicked tilt to the south, down which the wind drives cruelly, while the outfield is a jungle of rank grass and molehills, straitly confined by a hedge and ditch which promise short boundaries. A closer inspection shows that the wicket is but little better in quality than the circumference, and when we lose the toss we feel that we are in for a bad day. Our opponents are not formidable in appearance, but they all turn out in white flannels (there is not even one pair of British braces and black trousers to give us confidence) and set about the preparations for their innings in a business-like manner. The very first over is ominous

PLAY

of discomfiture. Our trusted fast-bowler has cried off at the last minute, and we have with great difficulty persuaded a slow left-hander, who is strongly fancied for Lord's, to take his place. He of course opens the proceedings, but the ball is slippery, and the ground, in spite of the morning's shower, still too hard to answer very readily to his spin. He evidently finds it difficult to get a length, and, when he does send down a well-pitched ball, the opposing batsman, a little dumpy, double-chinned fellow, who wields his bat with a short swift circular motion, lifts it with a wicked screw just out of long-off's reach into the ditch. We have on our side one confessed and undisguised "passenger," a pleasant fellow, who likes a day in the country and is always ready to come with us when we have a place to fill. We always try to put him out of harm's way at long-on or third man, but to-day it seems impossible to find a sanctuary for him. In the very first over a sharp mishit in the slips screws straight into his hands whence, of course, it falls innocuous to the ground. The over finished, he moves apologetically to mid-on and the first ball from our second bowler, an erratic and moderately swift right-hander, twists high up in his direction—and another

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chance has gone a-begging. When this has happened two or three times more, our captain moves him to square-leg, a place which our opponents, who generally retreat hastily before a leg-ball and edge it through the slips, have, so far, left unusually idle. In vain—for almost immediately a sharp smack from the double-chinned hero finds him dreaming, strikes him on the breast-bone and glances happily to the boundary. Wherever we put him the same thing happens. The batsmen follow him with an unerring instinct (for it is plainly impossible to attribute any of their actions to deliberate design), and half the runs in that fatal innings are made on a ricochet from some angle of his unhappy person. Our bowlers are soon demoralised. Changes follow each other quickly and ineffectually. Not a ball is hit truly, yet not one comes to any hands but the safe pair of our unfortunate passenger. The little tubby batsmen scoop and edge away with a surprising agility, bounding as fast as their own mishits between the wickets. The ball glances and rockets about the windy hillside, and at half-past four they have declared with their score at 140 for 3, a prodigious total as batting goes on these uneasy wickets. They take the field briskly, and after a few minutes our first

PLAY

two batsmen march to the wicket with evident misgiving. And indeed it is soon obvious that our batting is to be no more successful than our bowling. All our opponents' bowlers are right-handed, fast, and erratic. Some bowl round the wicket, some over, some with no run, some with a preliminary gallop like that of a frightened cart-horse, some with high actions, some with low. But one and all have this common characteristic that it is impossible to foretell from any one ball the nature of its successor. In this respect the bowler is obviously as much in the dark as the batsman, but it is to our undoing that the uncertainty turns. Not one of us seems able to time the ball. It hits us far more often than we it, and when at a quarter to six the last pair slouches lugubriously back to the pavilion, leg-byes are found to form the largest part of the total, the "passenger," with 12 not out (three gross mis-hits over the heads of the slips), coming a good second. Our two "Crusaders," who had come out expecting a field day, are sulkily nursing ribs and elbows, the slow bowler is pacing disconsolately up and down in the long grass behind the refreshment tent, and we are all of us relieved when the necessary courtesies are over and we are able to scramble into our

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brake again, and make our cheerless way homeward through the damp half-light.

But our expeditions are not always so unfortunate. Even an English May has its days of sunshine, and there are scores of grey villages with gabled streets and square church towers dotted about the plains of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon within easy driving distance. There is Rickling Green, fastest and pleasantest of village cricket grounds, famous for the record score of 920 which the Orleans Club made there in 1882. There is St. Ives, as lovable a little town as any in the Midlands; Huntingdon itself hardly less attractive, and many another, less known to fame perhaps, but possibly for that reason all the better suited to the display of our own rather modest cricketing talents.

Such are the amateur's summer recreations, and in winter he will find himself no less well supplied with opportunities. The Fives and squash racket courts are always ready for those who like their exercise to be brief and thorough. The beagles draw a small but regular following. A few favour the track at Fenners or keep themselves in condition with long solitary runs across the heavy roads and dripping fields that stretch from Madingley to the Gog-Magogs. But at Cambridge, as elsewhere, golf is really

PLAY

the loafer's pastime, and nowhere has golf triumphed over greater difficulties. The University Club was founded long ago, when English people knew little as yet of the requirements and possibilities of the game, and the site chosen for its exercise was one of the strangest imaginable. On the far side of Barnwell, dreariest of all the English slums, there lies a stretch of melancholy flats, surrounded by belching factory chimneys, intersected by deep ditches, by means of which no doubt the land was once redeemed from the marshes to its present state of comparative salubrity. The soil is of black and glutinous clay, upon which the grass grows in rank tufts that nowhere seem able to cohere into the dignity of turf. The land was used (or so it was alleged) in the summer-time for hay, though it is difficult to believe that that harsh soil could ever have produced a growth generous enough to deserve the title. At any rate, the Golf Club was not allowed to use it during the May term, nor were we permitted at any time to cut hazards or otherwise disturb the surface of the ground. Even in winter lean cattle wandered dolefully about it, seeking a sparse subsistence, and couching their gaunt bodies on the bare patches, which we called our greens, but which in fact differed only from

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the encircling morass in that they were occasionally visited by the mowing-machine during the winter terms, and had been worn by the concentrated trampling of our converging feet into a delusive evenness of surface. The only hazard besides the ditches, which were made to guard about one-third of the holes, was the town rifle-range. This ran down the middle of the course, and, when in use, constituted a very real danger, for at two or three holes an errant ball had often to be retrieved under rifle-fire occasionally supplemented by a machine-gun, the shells of which hurtled over one's head with a kind of flapping hiss peculiarly disquieting to a man of peaceful temperament. And the proximity of the town produced even more unpleasant consequences, for it was no uncommon event to find the corpse of an unhappy Barnwell cur-dog lying drowned in one of the ditches, and all the riff-raff of that quarter, who could not get employment as caddies, used to crowd about the greens to jeer at us, and stamp stray balls into the mud, whence, after an ironical and undisguisedly insincere pretence of assisting us in our search, they would retrieve them at their leisure for subsequent commutation into gin and bitter beer. It was a barbarous discipline,

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yet the links served as the training ground for not a few eminent golfers, and continued to be the recognised course of the University until, in the first years of King Edward, it became evident that a luxurious generation was growing tired of their austerities. At about the same time the foundation of a new and unofficial course on the Gog-Magogs began to seduce the club's members with great rapidity, and it was not long before a move became imperative. The University Club happened at this time to have as its Secretary a Scotsman who had been young enough at forty to come as an undergraduate to Trinity and enter into the life of the place with a youthful fervour and exuberance which, for all the grey which had begun to mitigate the native ardour of his locks, sufficed to put to shame the pursy indolence of our respective one-and-twenties. His rooms in the Great Court were always full of brother Scots and a few favoured Southrons, discussing the last football match and the prospects of Andy, Jim, or Alec for his "blue," listening to their host's stories in the Fife dialect, or subjecting him to volleys of that species of chaff to which his age and position too obviously exposed him. The room echoed day and night with whatever catch-phrase, story, or scrap of scandal

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were the moment's currency, and it was not long before the owner became as well known a figure as any in the University. At smoking concerts and dinner-parties he was in constant demand, for, besides his talent as a raconteur and mimic, he was an excellent after-dinner speaker (rare accomplishment south of the Tweed, and in an undergraduate almost unparalleled), and a gifted singer of comic songs, at which he would accompany himself on the piano with the greatest fluency and spirit. In all of these duties and pleasures he engaged with the utmost seriousness, and this was no doubt the secret of his success. In spite of the chaff of his many friends and the atmosphere of comedy with which he himself invested the proceeding, no undergraduate prepared with more genuine concern for the "Special" and the "General" through which he laboured to the degree of Bachelor. There was something almost pathetic in the sight of his burly moustached figure, hurrying, ridiculously decked in the short blue Trinity gown, to Hall or lectures. Yet in reality it was neither pathetic nor ridiculous, for the gown never graced a younger spirit.

It was to the energy of this remarkable character that the Golf Club owed its new

A painting by J.M.W. Turner titled 'Rain, Steam, and Great Central Railway Bridge'. The scene depicts a man in a small boat on a canal, leaning against a wooden railing and looking towards a large, multi-story brick building with many windows. The bridge's structure is visible in the foreground, and the overall atmosphere is one of a rainy day in London.

PUNTING: QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

PLAY

birth. He saw the gravity of its disease, found the new site, inspired the few remaining members with his own belief in its possibilities (a belief which, it is to be feared, subsequent events have hardly justified), and in a very few months had, as it were, carried the club on his own shoulders to its new dwelling-place. The move saved the club from premature decline, but the new course has not been to University golf what its founders anticipated. The Gogs still draw a large body of players, both Dons and undergraduates, who labour out daily upon bicycles down the long windy road that leads out past Cavendish Hall. A certain number belong to the club at Royston, some fourteen miles out on the Great Northern, where, from a sublime altitude of 200 feet, they can survey half East Anglia on every perilous tee. But the Mecca of Cambridge golf is and has for some time been the little course at Mildenhall, a strange little pocket of sand, bent, and pine-trees in the middle of the reclaimed fenland on the way to Newmarket Heath. The course has only nine holes, and, though it is hardly more than twenty miles from Cambridge, the trains which take one to it are few and leisurely. But the advent of the motor-car has brought it within half a day's journey for those who are

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fortunate enough to own or borrow one, and the pilgrimage to it is now constant and considerable. Nowhere can one find a pleasanter day's golf. The holes are short, but not too easy; the turf excellent, but straitly guarded; the greens small, but of infinite variety. It is never crowded, for few play there, except the enthusiasts of the University, and an occasional party of jockeys and trainers from the race-course, who may be seen in tight gaiters and peaked caps of strange design, labouring cheerfully, if ineffectually, in its numerous pitfalls. Its only fault is that it too easily becomes a habit, so that of all the distractions with which the way of youth is surrounded, none is more pleasantly and easily adapted to the waste of time.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

THE LONG VACATION

OF all Cambridge institutions perhaps the most typical is the "Long Vacation"—the rule, that is, by which those *in statu pupillari* are allowed to reside at the University during the months of June and July, between the May and October terms. It is not only that this rule is peculiar to Cambridge. Peculiarity (outside the pages of the popular novelist) is not always characteristic. The importance of this particular practice lies in the way in which it is conducted. To begin with the residence is, of course, voluntary, and here, at once, we introduce a process of natural selection, for only those who really love Cambridge and find her life congenial take advantage of this opportunity to enjoy it. Secondly, special leave has to be obtained so that only those come into residence who have at least some intention of working. Then again, it has to be remembered that to reside during the Long is rather an expensive

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way of spending the Vacation. Those who are not well off and have the opportunity of free quarters at home generally prefer, or are compelled, to take advantage of that opportunity. By these means the number of residents is kept at a comparatively small figure at each college, and the little colonies thus established find themselves subject to a very different order of life to that which prevails during ordinary term time. To begin with, the process of selection already referred to makes possible a considerable relaxation of ordinary discipline. The only added rigour is a rule that everyone must be in college by ten o'clock at night. But, as no one is allowed to live out of college in the Long, the restriction is hardly noticed, for there are no friends in lodgings whom we want to visit, and our sphere of interest thus becomes narrowed to our own courtyards. In other respects the strictness of ordinary college life is everywhere relaxed. There are no lectures or other scholastic engagements, except perhaps with private coaches, to be attended. The rules as to Chapel and signing-in are all of them abated. The tyranny of sport relents also, and, college competitions being over, and most of the more strenuous athletes, who are apt to find the Long Vacation slow, having disappeared

THE LONG VACATION

in pursuit of country house or county cricket, those of us who remain are free to turn to whatever form of amusement the caprice of the moment recommends to us. Under these influences our life attains a leisure and spontaneity foreign to the ordinary routine of lecture-rooms and college matches. We move with an Athenian ease and dignity, which is only heightened by contrast with the perpetual, hurrying, anxious stream of visitors with which the months of July and August annually afflict us. As far as our actual pursuits go, they differ but little, externally, from those of ordinary term time. Lawn-tennis, the backs, and Upper River, and all the other loafer's pastimes draw, perhaps, a slightly larger proportion of adherents. Cricket is still played, but colleges have to club together to produce reasonable teams, and, the stringency of competition being relaxed, play becomes of a comparatively flippant order. The annual "gyps' match" is a characteristic event, and, generally speaking, our efforts are inspired less by the lust for conquest than by the individual player's determination to enjoy himself. Moreover, the air of Cambridge at midsummer is little conducive to violent effort. Nowhere else does one encounter such extremes of climate. Nowhere

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is heat so bleak and cold so penetrating. It is less an affair of actual temperature than of atmospheric quality. When wind blows or rain falls, Cambridge is swept and lashed without protection. One does not easily forget her remorseless winters, the chilly turbulence of her May and June. But when midsummer comes, if it be a season of any natural ardour, wind and rain seem banished as if for ever. The whole plain glows like a plate thrust in the oven. There are no hills which one can climb for a lighter air, no valleys where wood or stream abate the violence of the tyrant sun. We are exposed to his full fury and must yield him full submission, for everything around us ministers to his domination. The surface of our great plain grows parched and hardened, beating back his rays into our faces; and the faint airs, which now and then stray aimlessly across it, seem rather to give heat a fresh activity than subject it to any mitigation. Our little river shrinks visibly, and the reduction of volume serves only to emphasise its natural disadvantages. It exhales warm and heavy odours. It grows glutinous, and even the thickness of its waters can no longer conceal the vast collection of tin cans and other refuse to which they afford a covering shallow, it is true, but at

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other seasons sufficiently opaque. Under these influences time tends to slip away in a decent inactivity. In the mornings we work—enough at least to justify our presence. But our work, like our play, is leisured, easy, almost careless, for, with the disappearance of lectures and other ordinary landmarks of time, a sense of infinite space and quietude overcomes us. The outside world seems more than ever remote : its voices reach us more faintly : we linger as in lotus-valleys under an unchanging sky, far removed from ordinary incentives and ordinary ambitions. An hour's toil seems an æon ; lunch flickers on a far horizon ; the hours which separate us from Hall merge in eternity. But time passes none the less, though too slowly for us to be more than vaguely conscious of its progress. The sun is still hot when our small brotherhood troops soberly to Hall, and, before we realise that we have dined, the cool of evening finds us dispersed about the river-bank, stretched upon our gowns, drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes.

But this sense of leisure and detachment is not the only peculiar quality of Long Vacation life. It is remarkable, also, for a certain broadening of the outlook, a breaking down of common barriers, both corporate and personal,

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and this in spite of the rule which herds us all into college and confines us there after ten o'clock. Indeed, this very rule contributes not a little to the effect which seems, at the first sight, so repugnant to it. Those of us who are brought into college from without are, of course, put into someone else's rooms. We may find ourselves suddenly transplanted to the habitation of a horsy undergraduate, bookless and adorned with foxes' masks, the scuts of hares, and photographs of the momentary favourites of the lyric stage; or it may be the rooms of a studious and anarchical bachelor which receive us, lined with Fabian tracts and translations from the Russian, with chairs of battered wicker, a naked oak table and a brown tea-pot, in the place of the tantalus and green plush and tassels of the more luxurious junior. Or chance may precipitate us into the careless, smoke-dried abode of a roving Don who is gone on a political tour to Hungary—or we may suddenly find ourselves confronted with any one of the infinite degrees of personality which range between these random specimens. The result is an uprooting of personal landmarks, a weakening of the sense of identity. We seem cut off from intimate ties; a strangeness is added to the life we know, like that which

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afflicts us when we visit familiar places in a dream. The world takes on a new aspect, and we view life at a new angle, with a mind more detached, less hampered by habit and predisposition.

The very smallness of our numbers, too, works in the same direction. We have to share with other colleges for our games, and, in spite of the ten o'clock rule, we find the commerce between college and college grown sensibly freer. Where the society is so small, acquaintance and even friendship spread quickly, and from knowing one man in a neighbouring foundation you find yourself in a week familiar with ten. You drift into wholly new circles of acquaintance, and become aware of strange characters whom the crowd and hurry of full term have hitherto obscured from you. You come suddenly in a most sober college, where you have had many friends, upon a strange figure of so vehement a personality that you cannot understand how even the dead weight of propriety amidst which he lives can have so long concealed him from you. You meet him first playing tennis with a friend, or rather that is the professed purpose of your meeting. In fact the game, like everything else into which he projects his influence, rapidly develops into

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a riotous burlesque. He adds a fresh quality to intercourse, which is neither wit nor humour, but which none the less makes you laugh till your ribs ache and your whole system quakes in protest. He gives new colour to existence, and a new vivacity, bringing a new extravagance into its contrasts, throwing its hitherto unnoticed details into fantastic lights and shadows and startling reliefs. When you first meet him you think the flamboyance of his language and the extraordinary vivacity of his ejaculations must be the effervescence of a passing mood, but experience shows you that they are but by-products of his natural energy. You go back to tea with him, and find his rooms equipped with an austerity for which his rather florid taste in costume had not prepared you. A few reproductions of the primitive Flemings hang on his walls, and a piano, a plaster cast, and one battered armchair, are the only other articles of furniture which catch your eye. Nor has he many books for one whose conversation betrays such literary tendencies. There are a few tall folios of seventeenth-century printing, which he flourishes at you with the assurance of a connoisseur, but which you do not suspect him of reading, and you notice a tattered volume or two of French poetry thrust

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carelessly in amongst his classical library. When you come to know him better he sometimes recites a stanza or two of these to you at breakfast, declaiming them in a nasal chant of incredible resonance, and, from time to time, emphasising some crisis of rhythm or vocables by raising his voice to a shout, and beating the cover of the ham and egg dish with a table-spoon. On this occasion, however, his methods are less strenuous. He lolls and smokes cigarettes. Tea threatens to prolong itself to dinner-time. He opens the piano, and, for half an hour, entertains you with fragments of Bach, Wagner, and Beethoven, all of which he plays by ear with an excellent touch but little continuity, singing and whistling in accompaniment from time to time with extraordinary spirit and volume. Now he mimics the English horn through his nose, now strengthens a weak passage in his instrumentation with a spluttering imitation of the drum, now neighs in a manner strangely suggestive of the violin. You find yourself armed with a comb and a piece of paper to represent some other member of the orchestra. You even sing—to your own great surprise, and with an inaccuracy that elicits a howl of execration from your host. At seven o'clock you stumble out into Trum-

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pington Street with your ears ringing and your mind in a whirl, and make your way back to the evening quiet of your own college weighted and stimulated with a new experience.

On another evening you go to dine quietly with a retiring scholar of Trinity, in whose rooms you have spent a hundred placid evenings. You have, as you expect, an indifferent dinner ; for your host is careless of the needs of the flesh, and leaves the ordering of all his entertainments to his bed-maker, whose tastes are not your own. Dinner ended with a dish of the famous *crème brûlée* (the appearance of which your host knows to be a condition precedent to your own) you move to the window seat, and loll there smoking and looking down into the Great Court, which is still light and busy. By degrees visitors begin to filter in, and by nine o'clock there are a dozen of you assembled in the darkening room intermittently engaged in rather desultory conversation. Suddenly the door opens and there enters a small dark figure which makes upon you, at the first glance, an impression of extraordinary vivacity. It enters, not rapidly, but with a decision and energy of movement that give a greater suggestion of rapidity than any mere locomotion could do. Vitality flickers like an emanation from every

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gesture. The face is strongly marked, and suggests, though it does not show, the lines of age: yet it is susceptible of the most rapid and complete variations of expression. He is arguing as he comes upstairs upon a point of metaphysic, and, although it is obvious that his companion knows more of the subject than he does, the superiority avails him little, for his opponent marshals his few forces so adroitly, and diverts attack from any point of weakness with such dexterity, that the heavier armament wastes its fire and spends itself in fruitless demonstrations. The rest of the room instinctively turns to listen, and from that moment the newcomer holds the floor unchallenged. He seems to know everyone, and to have the entrée of every clique, though he carries the hall-mark of none. His clothes are too neat for the unconventional, hardly chic enough for a member of the conventional brotherhood. His manner has a vivacity and polish foreign to the former class, and a touch of elaboration which would be impossible in the latter. You soon perceive that he is a phenomenon which could have grown in no other atmosphere than that of Trinity. Nowhere could his extraordinary zest for life have found sufficient nourishment but in that microcosm, where every creed, every

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ideal and every idiosyncrasy find fellowship and sustenance. He spends his time in the pursuit of experience. The form of it is immaterial to him. Ordinary academic duties cannot divert him. He brushes them aside and drives on his way, talking, arguing, gesticulating. He passes nothing by, forgets nothing, wastes nothing. There is nothing he cannot assimilate and transmute into energy. And with him energy is conversation, and conversation an art. Never have you heard anyone talk so much, at such pressure, and with such concentration. Every inch of him talks. If he tells a story he seems to melt in turn into the personality of every character which figures in it. Every action of it takes visible form in his own body, every sentence is fitted to its subject-matter with the nicest aptitude. Before the necessity of your college gate calls you from the room, he has told you a dozen, the last of which occupies a full hour by the clock, and you leave him embarked upon a thirteenth which seems likely to last till daylight, so copious is it in detail, so aptly and dexterously elaborated. The discovery of so strange a character, of course, provokes further investigations, and during the next few days you spend many hours in his company. You find him

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always the same. He begins to talk when you wake him at eleven in the morning. He is talking when you leave him at night. From the moment of his first meeting with you, his conversation has a personal interest and lack of reserve, which seems to enrol you at once among his intimates. Yet when at last he talks himself into a hansom cab and so to the station and out into the world, you find you know strangely little of his actual life. Beyond a certain point he is a mystery, or at least a blank—a void which the brilliance and detail of the foreground make it all the more difficult to fathom.

Such discoveries are, it may be supposed, not very conducive to the pursuit of learning, but, as the summer advances, the temptations of society pass with it. The end of July, which begins the holidays of the common world, sets our own small world in motion. August once reached, our numbers grow daily smaller, our life more leisurely. Cricket ceases, and before long it becomes difficult even to collect a tennis four. Golf is out of the question, for it is impossible to brave the heat of the long, dusty roads which separate us from the golf course. The mere thought of a bicycle afflicts one with an intolerable weariness. If one stays till the

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end of August, one becomes an anchorite. Even the Dons begin to disappear on their annual pilgrimage to Switzerland and Italy. Finally, one is left alone with some ancient fellow for whom the world outside the University has long ceased to exist. The two of you dine alone at the high table, mere specks in the dark solitude of your college hall, and you grow, in listening to his interminable stories of dead customs and vanished names, into an age as timeless as his own. So the first of September finds you, and, with it, your weary bed-makers and "gyp" pack you up and send you forth, dazed and scarcely sentient, into the glare and clatter of the outer world, while they themselves turn reluctantly to the great autumn cleaning which celebrates the close of the Academic year.

With this event we may well bring our summary to an end, for it is an event which to many of us means the end of our University career. And even if we come up again in October we come to find that another step in the process of continual change has taken place. The world which has been ours for the past twelve months is in part vanished, in part renewed. We must set about adapting ourselves to new circumstances. You and I will not



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embark upon this fresh adventure. We have worked through the year together, and, let us hope, gathered a few impressions which may outlast the short space of our companionship. Unless we part company we may begin to weary one another. It is compliment enough that you should have tolerated your cicerone for thirteen chapters. Let him touch his hat, and discreetly melt away.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH

APOLOGY

THE brigand chief Caruso, at the foot of the scaffold which was to bring to an end a promising but as yet imperfectly effectual career, is said to have exclaimed, "If I had known the alphabet, I should have conquered the world." Had he had the good fortune to be educated at Cambridge, he would, it is to be feared, only too soon have found cause to modify his conviction; for neither Cambridge nor any other system yet devised by man has achieved enough to justify so sublime a confidence. Indeed, the attempt to summarise the results of three sufficiently conscientious years of University residence shows how extraordinarily limited was one's experience, and how very small a proportion of it has effected any permanent lodgment in the mind. One looks back for a purpose or a meaning, only to see oneself drifting along in an aimless and

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ungoverned progress, intent always upon some immediate need, some momentary pleasure, or negligible ambition. One after another the infinitesimal events, which made the only variation in the smoothness of those uneventful years, laid hold of the tendrils of growth, and led them on like a creeper spreading blindly and unconsciously about a sunny wall. The step from point to point seemed always full of purpose, yet one sees now that it had, in fact, no purpose beyond a vague and momentary attraction.

The sun shone, the rain nourished, and the blind growth spread itself now up, now down, now to left, now to right, in fantastic angles, and meaningless proportions. To recapitulate the details of so insensible a progress were impossible, to give it meaning would be to force on it a quality to which it was essentially a stranger. Nor is it easy to contrive out of the random impressions gathered in its unordered course any ordered picture of the combination of which it formed a part. The mind has a singular faculty of self-deception. However small its angle of vision at any given moment, it never can be convinced that it comprehends less than the whole. It is only when the sudden impact of a new experience

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breaks down some unseen barrier that it begins to realise its former limitations—and even then limitation continues, and continues, until the next upheaval, unobserved.

It is only, therefore, when a definite purpose leads one to attempt the analysis of some independent era of experience that one begins to realise the lamentable imperfection of its scope. Yet, in this particular case, one is driven to pursue analysis along the line of actual experience, for the real life of Cambridge is only to be found in the blind progress of the thousands of tiny entities in which it has its being, in the aggregate of all those narrow visions, petty interests and trivial ambitions.

And it can only be truly seen in a focus as limited as its own. Directly one tries to set it in a wider horizon the proportions are disturbed, the essential elements become submerged. To realise the intensity of that life in its impregnable conviction of its own importance, its devotion to the immediate ambitions, its enjoyment of the instant pleasures, of its tiny sphere, one must re-create in one's own mind the old intensity, the old restriction. One must learn once more to think of Cambridge not in relation to other ideals and other necessities, not as an institution susceptible

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of praise or blame, but as a separate world, independent and unconscious of its surroundings—a world of which one still remains an essential, necessary, undistinguished and indistinguishable part. To do more is to become entangled in vain speculation and barren criticism, and end by adding yet another volume to the tedious polemics of University reform.

It follows, of course, that in such an exuberance and energy of growth much that is important, much that is essential, will pass one by. One is fettered to one's own experience, to the impressions which, however small their absolute value, the intensity of that experience has left imprinted on the memory. To a wider vision much of the record may seem monotonous, all perhaps trivial. Minds bred to other ideals may find it irritating. To experience gained in other circumstances much may appear untrue; but if it comes honestly and spontaneously to the pen's point, it will satisfy the only law to which the nature of our object can require it to conform. For, where experience at its clearest was unordered and inarticulate, it would be vain to aim at absolute truth—presumptuous to hope for perfect expression.

I at least shall hardly be suspected of either the hope or the ambition. My purpose has

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been more humble, and if I have succeeded in giving an impression, however imperfect, of one life that was actually lived with pleasure and perhaps with profit, I shall not have been altogether unsuccessful.

THE END



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